The Triple Alliance

By

H. WATSON CLAPP

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PREFACE.

The purpose of this book is especially designed to prove all true success is promoted through the lofty principles enjoyed by the seeker after its favors, and is measured by the insistent and frequent application of the choice traits of character thoroughly imbued with elements, that make for straightforward action with strict honesty of purpose. Such were the traits of character instilled into the minds of the young people of our story, during their young rural life among the hills of old New England, that it would have been difficult indeed, for them to have accepted other than the righteous way.

The story has actuality for its base, while some names and places are fictitious, the personalities, the environments, the deeds and experiences, the alliance proposition, the matrimonial entanglements and the happy results, all owe their inception to actualities. The object lesson here involved, serves to prove that the prominent traits displayed by these young people in their every approach of the stranger have commanded his respect and endeavor, also proving it were possible, even with human nature as selfishly organized, to successfully culminate a seemingly impossible proposition.

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THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

CHAPTER I

A RURAL INHERITANCE

As the principal river of old New England courses its way down from the hills of Vermont and New Hampshire, from whence it gathers its head among a thousand springs, sparkling forth with dogmatic persistency, delivering the first element of sustenance for the well-being of all phases in life, the impression is forced of the gathering momentum, all-sufficient to gain greatly in importance as a factor of enchantment and power.

After passing over the line in old Puritan Massachusetts, it bethinks it discovers amid the countless murmurs of its own ripples, a murmur of appeal, a whimper of distress, which so agitates its sympathies, that it pauses upon its merry journey to inquire, what hast thou little one in common with me, wherein can I be of service in alleviating thy wrongs, imaginative or otherwise?

Stop, if thou wilt, on your onward happy course, plaintively implores the whimper, and listen to me. I have come all the way down from yonder hilltops, in search of some tangible outlet to the heaven-wide sea, I have among my assets much valuable material that the wide wide world is in need of and quite anxious to obtain. My mission at the moment is, to seek entrance to thine all-powerful roadstead and I implore thee, most gracious parent, to open up thy side line and let me come in.

This is the plaint of an ambitious self-respecting mountain stream, circuiting its way rapidly through the narrow and intricate gorges, from near the summit of majestic old Hoosic. It must indeed find an

outlet for its gathering force, and the father of New England waters can do no less, than to open its arms and let this self-respecting applicant happily come in, thus forming a conjunction that makes for its own further aggrandizment, as it passes onward en route to the sea.

This stream, small at its inception and not large at its surrender, drains beside the hills of old Hoosic, many small and medium hamlets snugly ensconced, throughout a portion of northwestern Massachusetts, where the native population is largely rural, and yet, much business is transacted other than the cultivation of the soil, with manufacturing supplying much labor for the people.

Always have the people throughout this region been prolific, no race suicide has been at all likely to concern the people. The bracing air, the opportunities for romping exercise, the physical freedom there present, always has developed healthy and robust children, a good old age has oftener been noticed among these environments than a crippling early demise, while such conditions as obtain here are, of late, being appreciated by the people of busy and crowded cities.

The schools of this romantic neighborhood, pretend not to furnish a complete life education, thus, the boys and girls are generally expected to spend a year or two on tuition elsewhere; most of the parents desire their offspring to secure better preparation for the battle of life than had been given them, thus, money has been freely voted for schools, when at the usually turbulent annual town meeting, they will battle for hours over other matters that call for increased taxes.

Among the prominent citizens of the village we have in mind as we write, are the Kents, the Carters and the Harts, all thoroughly upright and sturdy citizens and termed throughout the neighborhood,

as "Farmer Kent," "Contractor Carter," and "Stone Hart," the latter operating a marble quarry, with power accumulated through the force gained by the village stream, as it courses its way rapidly over the rocky bottom, in its haste to reach its complete surrender.

These three characters were born and raised complete in this neighborhood, attended the same schools, and played together as boys, moreover, have been especially fond of each other throughout. They all married some girl in the neighborhood and brought forth the same number of children, although not divided alike as to sex.

Farmer Kent has a boy and two girls. The boy he named Jonas, one of the girls is much older than the others and she has been named Charity, the other one is called Janice.

Contractor Carter raised two boys and a girl, one boy being much older than the others and some peculiar, and then some.

The quarryman has been blessed with twin girls, and a boy, whom he christened Wesley, the twins are Betty and Bella. The Carter girl is Sybil, the boys are Cyrus and Basil, Cyrus being considerably the older; these have a bachelor uncle who is another peculiar character.

The Hart children have a maiden aunt of such proportions, mentally and physically, as to often disturb the equanimity of the household, Miss Eunice Hart, by the neighborhood she is usually termed "Aunt Eunice." The Bachelor uncle is called Jed, as the short for Jared.

These are the characters that must be woven into this largely realistic story and taken altogether if any are used, because of being so intertwined in their lives throughout, from school days to life's approaching end. These character personifications portray almost every type of human trait aside from

the criminal and must all be utilized to fully equip this life story, to properly serve the purpose intended.

While in school, both boys and girls have always their chums, generally brought about through some natural affinity; circumstances, however, may prevent some alliances that might occur otherwise, this being more noticeable during the later years, as class, because of wealth, does not at the time this story is laid, prevail to any great extent in a community of this type, each one and all being seemingly quite as desirable as associates in common, nothing can be doing in the line of caste.

The boys, Basil, Wesley and Jonas, are affinity in very truth and practice, having little at variance and much in common, when at the same time they each have distinctive traits and preferences. That they do not think alike concerning many things, is so much to their credit and advantage in the battle of life, that fate has decreed shall fall to their lot. As this story unfolds, the reader will learn to appreciate perhaps more fully than before, the advantage to be gained through friendly antagonism, engendered by opposing minds.

These boys are full of frolic and always have some project afoot, to create sport for themselves, even at the expense of some discomfiture to others, but never put over anything of a malicious or cruel character. Matters of serious import often arise between these boys, but always a reasoning together will satisfactorily straighten them out. It has been said that where there are no quarrels there can be no "real boys," but an assembly of nincompoops will substitute.

Whenever trouble is brewing or about to brew, never is there any doubt in the neighborhood of how these boys will line up. Seldom do others effect a combine antagonistic to either one of the boys, forming what is known and termed to be "The Triple

Alliance," upon the principle, perhaps, that "in unity lies strength," and yet, "The Triple Alliance" is not only respected for its prowess, but all its members are loved as school companions. They each have high regard for justice, they will not stand apace and see any wrong, actually an unjustifiable act, committed by anyone whomsoever, especially upon a weaker or handicapped party, and often have they needlessly gotten into trouble, because of this insatiable desire to see fair play.

These three young hopefuls acquired naturally the affinity that is present between them, it simply is an inheritance, really, it needed not to be acquired, it is simply an effect from parental cause, but perhaps is considerably intensified as practiced by these boys.

The natural alliance existing between these boys, is often a subject of conversation between the village people, who find it not difficult to account for. What is not so easily accounted for, however, is the undisguised fact that the girls of these affiliated families, do not appear to possess this trait in any marked degree; it is believed by some, however, to be there just the same, although not so plainly visible as with the boys. The more naturally brutal nature of the boy is bound to portray a trait of this type in plainer exhibit, while the more refined and defensive tendencies of female nature, ordinarily and naturally disclose much of hesitant friendship, leaving not the same margin of evidence for distinction. Thus, apparently, the girl members of these three families, associated together and with other girls in no abnormal way.

We are thus particular in describing these characters, because of the general mix-up subsequent events in their lives force them into, enabling the reader to better grasp the complicated situation, as

page after page unfolds of unusual happenings among these stirring youth.

At quite an early day it was evident among the older people, that a bevy of youth is here present that under and with certain combinations, are bound to furnish amusement and interest for the good people of the neighborhood, and likely many places elsewhere, as hardly can it be correctly presumed that all will settle down in the same section. Neither can it be safely calculated that these boys will do as their fathers did in selecting their best girl; some other than a girl of the same village may attract one or more of these "Allied Triplets," just who, they cannot tell. Cupid sometimes runs freaky during his cranky race, and before all of these scions of worthy old stock, have become lovingly and legally hitched up for keeps, old Cupid may have exhausted many of his resourceful resources, and yet, be puzzled withal, and mayhap a bit disheartened, at the prospect of satisfactory results.

When opening up the consideration of incidents, marking the milestones of our youthful characters, who are of the younger set along in the teens and are soon to leave the village school for higher grades of learning, we are forced to observe the same rules of favor existing in the school boy or girl of twelve, as may later be evidenced in the swain and maiden of eighteen or twenty; at the latter age, however, considerably more refined and hesitating, this demonstration of favor never being forgotten upon St. Valentine's day, if upon any other. Often upon this day has worked out a fondness, although but a midway school day choice, that has proven out a happy and permanent selection.

That preferences there are among these young people, we will not attempt to deny, on the contrary, will endeavor to supply much evidence to prove, that our proteges are not to be caught napping in this part of life's game.

Surprise parties are as common and popular among these people as among others elsewhere, the adult people ever standing ready to help push the old custom along. They know all about it for they have been there, most of them having worked out their preferences at the "surprise party shrine," thus stand ready to give the young people "hearty godspeed."

Jonas Kent was an especially bright scholar in mathematics, as "spelling bees" were always more or less popular with country folk, so were "problem bees" quite as popular in this neighborhood, and each time one was held, Jonas Kent was the only boy to leave the cypher board absolutely clear and clean.

The procedure was, certain problems were placed upon the board, the several contestants were lined up, the problems were divided into three classes, the first three contestants approach the board, each taking up one of the divisions and working out as many of the problems, as possible within the time limit alloted, with time up, must pass on to another division, thereby making room for the next. The person who won the first contest must take the front of the line next time. Should more than one succeed in clearing the board, the footman shall be determined by a drawing of slips from a hat.

Among the girls in this contest, Sybil Carter was more than a match for the others, thus Jonas and Sybil seemed decreed by fate to be paired off, and the situation seemed quite agreeable to both; it had seemed to furnish the suggestion which Jonas appeared willing to take advantage of, always inviting Sybil to everything happening along, even attempting to take her away from her parents at the church door, when the "meetin' house" was out. Sybil's parents considered matters were getting on too fast, and thus had a word to express now and

then, that served to dampen the seemingly precipitate ardor of Jonas, who, however, good-naturedly mused: "I guess I can bide my time, they probably will get off in good time to suit my purpose, guess Sybil will keep a year or two more or less, even with the lid screwed on."

Basil Carter was especially a "spelling scholar," and when at a "spelling bee," was usually the last among the boys to leave the desk, while Betty Hart sent the girls all to their seats, thus forming an affinity between them with the fact, that when at last they were pitted against each other, to spell off the match between the girls and boys, neither could be spelled down, there being no words in the speller that could beat either. So apparently here is another match.

Wesley Hart was delighted in composition writing and was at his best in that art, and having quite an aptness toward the humorous, the school generally expected a treat, whenever it came Wesley's turn to entertain them.

The present teacher decreed that the writer should not read his own composition, but might exchange with whomever he would and it seemed more convenient, in Wesley's way of looking at it, to exchange with Janice Kent, as her seat was located just opposite to his, thus, they had something in common by being such near neighbors, and then, their homes were adjacent and they could and did practice the reading of each other's compositions, when alone by themselves and thus, could coach each other and obtain the true expression intended by the writer. This method was probably a great factor in placing their production ahead of all others in the first two contests. But here this arrangement ended, for it had occurred to Wesley one night as he suddenly awoke from a troubled sleep, that the convenient hitch up with Janice was really unfair. Indeed, he

reasoned, "it is downright mean," yes, it is a dirty trick and I wonder Janice has not discovered the rottenness of it, but I dislike to call her attention to it, evidently she has overlooked the unfairness of the proceeding and will feel much ashamed at having engaged in it at all, when discovering its real character. I must find some way of dropping the arrangement without disclosing my real motive, but here again, that will be unfair to her. Now that is always the way, whenever one tells a lie, he will need to tell another to conceal the first one. Should I attempt to beat around the bush to the right in avoiding her, she will certainly come around in the opposite direction, with questions that cannot be evaded, so I am going to tell her straight out and both share the blame.

It has become an almost settled conviction among the other scholars, that one or the other of the effusions produced by these two contestants are to be decided as superior to the others. Here again appears an efficient element for the pairing off of another couple. These happenings have all come about in a most natural way, thus what, pray, can otherwise be expected to result?

Matters of school life drift quite ordinarily along, parties and all kinds of social functions happen along also, that bring all these young people frequently together. Whenever convenient and possible, however, they will be found nicely and exclusively paired off, visiting together as though in imitation of Adam and Eve in the old-time Garden of Eden. Apparently, such felicity might, and perhaps should, continue, but human nature has been known to possess traits of unreliability, causing it to depart even from its own will and wish to work out its own traditions, to beguile its own intentions, in short, to become fickle, absurd and ridiculous, thus, who can tell, and who will endeavor to guess, what

the future will work out as a permanent line-up for these three pairs of schoolmates? Much surprise may meet the reader at what the fates shall finally decree.

The last term of school at home has commenced, much talk and planning have been engaged in as the term progresses, concerning their coming experience. It has been decided by the parents of the triplets to have them all attend the same school; always have they been so fond of each other, it is considered cruel to part them, inasmuch, as they desire to be not parted. The parents in one case prefer a different school from the one chosen by the others, however, majority rule decides the case for all. The question is argued by the neighbors, "after school days, what then?" they cannot always be together after going out into the world.

The day following the closing of home school days of our heroes, they meet under the old oak tree in the home pasture lot of Farmer Kent, holding a long and serious conference, for the most part regarding their future. Each one exhibiting a special preference in occupation after graduation, previously having mentally outlined the general character of the selection, they each in turn duly proceed to disclose their plans to the others.

Basil Carter, being practically the one possessing the stronger individuality, naturally and logically becomes the leader, if really a leader be present among them, being generally looked to first for an expression of opinion, voluntarily proceeds to name his choice of a business line to enter.

The boys are all greatly serious upon this occasion, fully realizing the solemnity due the event of selecting their life employment. Perhaps the reader may surmise that they are somewhat premature, as many things can happen before the day of opportunity arrives, to completely change their boyish

plans. But "we shall see, just what we shall see," regarding this feature of this case, it may turn out that these boys are not of the ordinary, frivolous, haphazard, go-as-you-can type.

Basil opens his remarks in a firm frank way: "I have many times canvassed the various legitimate and lucrative vocations in life and have to discover, anything better to my mind than "transportation." I believe it occupies first place in importance, the public cannot do without it, thus, it is bound to be a lucrative occupation, for the public is willing to pay for what it wants and must have. No particular class is called upon to support transportation, every class is bound to contribute, everybody will ride when opportunity comes along."

"But," interrupts Jonas, "that requires large capital and what do you know about that?"

"Well," retorts Basil, "there is a point right there, but one must watch out for a fresh opportunity and strike quickly, wherever one can get in at the bottom. First, acquire something attractive and of value, that can command the loan of another's capital, then work out of it something that is attractive on its face, when other capital will seek a housing therein. I believe there are yet good locations in this broad land, where a railroad of some sort is yet awhile needed, where it can serve the public exclusively, and where, if the proposition be rightly handled, a man so handling it, can with limited capital acquire control, if not a majority ownership, while I consider the one who shall propose and execute such a proposition, will contribute as much toward the benefit and progress of the world, as another who may employ his endeavor in other vocations that may present themselves, to the young man out after employment for his genius, tact and muscular effort. Thus, my hearties, transportation is my hobby and I believe it to be the best hobby pos-

sible, with which to make the world go, and about the best one to nurse, personally speaking. Now, Wesley, my boy, what art thou in mind to tackle, when once thou hast fully spurned from thy shoulders, the swaddling clothes of old school days?"

"Basil, I have to tell you of a wild thing to do, but perhaps the taste is more inherited than acquired, and yet, I have many times attempted to thresh out another something, but none else will seem to fill the bill. My father is a quarryman, but that is not sufficient to satisfy his young scion, something better craves he, yet further in the same line. Now, Basil, I must consider that we, as God's own creatures, are in duty and honor bound to use the best there is in us, to develop and make available for the benefit of the world he has created, the wealth he has so kindly and graciously placed within our reach. True, we cannot all follow the same calling and we should not utterly disregard any one calling, because it seems to carry greater hardships than another, if that calling be compatible with our taste. My choice, Basil, is mining, extracting from the bowels of the earth, that which the Creator of the Universe has placed there for man to extract. The wealth gathered from mines, immortalized 'King Solomon', mining, made 'Rome' the mistress of the world, mining, has made 'Great Britain' the world's commercial dictator, mining, is making the 'United States' the richest country in the world. Show me a country that has no mines and I will show you a people sunk in degradation of poverty, and poverty makes cowards of nations as well as of men. You must remember that a deposit of mineral is simply a crop already raised, harvested, and in the bin of Old Earth, where you may check it out at your pleasure.

God made the deposit, he gave the prospector knowledge and insight, guiding him on his way to well-filled vaults. Without the miner, you would not have a fry-

ing pan, a spoon, or even a hatpin, eliminate the miner and you will soon wipe out civilization, a nation's prosperity depends largely upon the extent, variety and development of its mineral resources, mark that down plainly, my hearties. Mining has transformed more financially broken men into millionaires, and placed them in positions of honor and trust, than has any other business among men. Statistics are available to show, that more money has been lost during the last decade in banking, than has been lost among those engaged in mining. Therefore, my good lads, I must ask you to respect the occupation of my choice. While I admit the importance of transportation, I cannot concede it first place in importance to the world. The people of bygone generations had transportation, and even though crude it was, they made it do. Years before public transportation came into being, they had been supplied with whatever their needs demanded, from the strong vaults God had builded below the surface, without which their efforts upon the earth's surface, would have but locally met the requirements of the world. Transportation is necessary, but material to make it available must come first.

"While admitting present methods of transportation are essential to the present pace of the world, these methods and the investment therein, would prove worthless to the owners with little or nothing to transport, therefore, Basil, old boy, I cannot conscientiously allow transportation first place. Production of commercial commodities must of necessity come before the carriers thereof, to supply the roadbed and vehicle equipment."

"Now, Jonas, staid and irreproachable old Jonas, what may have arrested your attention as a business calling?" inquires Basil.

"Well, Basil," replies Jonas, "humble though my choice may be, it is in comparison with yours a more fitting one for me. You have always been, throughout

our school days, a character of greater brilliance and of a more restless type, evincing a stronger desire for notoriety, with a greater appreciation of public notice and comment, thus your selection is quite in keeping with many traits of your make-up, and I think mine is quite as much in accordance and sympathy with the prominent traits within my composition.

"A ranch, a western ranch, my dear fellows, comes nearest to my ideal. I have heard you tell of the importance of transportation, I have listened to the nicely depicted desire of the Creator, for the extraction from its stronghold of deposit, the boundless wealth thus placed for the world's benefit, and now claim for my humble calling a greater importance than either. George Washington was a farmer and he was a good farmer, he liked it and endorsed it as an engaging and fascinating occupation for others. There was a time in the history of the world when nearly everybody was a farmer. Deep down in the heart of many there is a secret love for the soil and a longing to engage in its cultivation. There is nothing more mysteriously enchanting in life, than the sprouting of a seed and the growth of a plant to maturity, moreover, farming is a game that one can play and feel emphatically, that he is making his life fully worth while, in being a producer instead of a mere consumer. In this age of cities, a large portion know nothing of this instinct for the soil, most farmers know something about the cities, but the average city man has not the remotest idea of the primeval longing for the soil, that should come to man as naturally endowed.

"The first thing man was ever known to do when placed in the garden of Eden, was to 'eat'. Man cares not to ride when nursing an empty belly. Gold and silver he cannot eat, and with nothing to purchase, it is always but dross. What, then, do thy callings count, with none to till the soil and raise the beef and fat, man must consume before he can toil at any calling whatever?

"I claim as first among the commercial callings of man, 'agriculture', with 'mining' as the second, and both are considered by millions as beneath them. Vehicles of transportation are not available, or the steel roadways upon which they are to run, until some poor menial has descended to the depths to provide the material therefor. So now, my hearties, whoever has the best claim to importance, it is for us to make good in that which we have chosen. Let us one and all, here and now, make between us a compact, seriously and solemnly, to strive and make each his own part an unqualified success and be satisfied with nothing short."

Basil and Wesley concede the points so comprehensively made by Jonas and willingly subscribe to his suggestions, that all use their best endeavor "to make good" in their several chosen lines and Basil adds, "never be a quitter."

Wesley maintains a dogged silence for some time, while the others exchange several pleasantries and until chafed by Jonas with, "A penny for your thoughts, Wesley."

"Well, old chums," retorts Wesley, "I have been debating with myself the wisdom of propounding to you a proposition, which I confess has struck me hard, I believe it is entirely original with me, and yet, I may lose your respect for my good sense in unfolding it to you.

"Oh, no, old boy, let's have it," cries Basil.

"Yes, yes," says Jonas, "let's have nothing mysterious between us, always so far, have we been open and frank, let's solemnly agree to continue thus."

"Well," says Wesley, "that spirit of union in mind and purpose between us, is what suggested to me the possibility of such a proposition as I am about to startle you with. We have each chosen our lines for the future and they are so widely different, that it is hardly possible to concentrate them as one joint enterprise and

will necessarily drift us far apart, a situation that I for one very much deplore, while such a proceeding will make of us practically strangers. We have been almost as one and certainly as brothers, since our school days first began. Soon we are to drift out into the mazes of the world's business life, in vastly different vocations. Shall we, when graduation is passed, shake hands and say goodbye, immediately and permanently passing out of each other's lives, forget all the joys each has contributed to the other's happiness, lose altogether the influence and support we have learned to lean upon, in our intercourse and youthful aspirations, our confidences in each other so firmly established, to be handed over to the bygones of life, thus becoming entirely useless in a practical sense? Now then, my hearties, need this transformation come to pass?

Listen then to the voice of thy babbling chum,
Whose wild deductions may so effect thine ears,
That grave doubts of sanity to them may come
To prove mistaken thou hast been, all these years.

"Basil and Jonas, what say you, graduation passed, shall we each saunter forth in quest of clues, leading up to our several cherished vocations, as a unit in purpose, as a unit in interest therefrom, but only unifying our efforts and talents in the combination of results attained, each in his best judgment making best possible strides, each ambitious to excel in results, each equally honest and upright in all dealings with fellowmen, each equally anxious and happy to contribute from his end to the joint accumulation, realizing alway that either may meet handicap in a greater degree than either of the others, realizing also, that many years may pass before all three shall have gained a secure position?"

"Just what do you mean, Wesley," inquires Jonas, "is it that we pool our issues?"

"Yes," replies Wesley, "whenever we shall have acquired issues to pool, but that will be some years

hence, how many may depend somewhat upon luck, much upon diligence and safe judgment, and some upon frugality and straightaway tactics.

"I would suggest incorporation of separate interests as one, with a general headquarters somewhere central of the locations of the several interests, each of us to separately conduct our own line exclusively. It will simply mean a community of interests as to results, but separately conducted, each under its own capital and resources, allowing each to make or receive loans from the others, but always upon strict business principles, otherwise expressed, each enterprise must stand upon its own footing and be regarded as a separate unit, in its contributions in profits to the general fund.

"Jonas suggests that one line of business might have an advantage over the others as to possible profit, while its manager might put forth much the lesser effort, nevertheless, thus the contribution of one would necessarily be inferior to that of the others and the manager would feel measly mean, while the others might consider 'honors were not even.' Moreover, some of us might have more capital to start with, could such an arrangement be made practical."

"There is one thing that can serve as an obstacle, replies Wesley, and that is 'human nature'. Have we not in our relations with each other throughout our school life, practically smothered those traits of human nature, that might serve to cause trouble in the proposed arrangement, has not our unswerving loyalty to each other under every situation possible, caused the absence of selfishness between us, and has not the natural fondness we realize exists in our consideration for each other, stopped the natural tendencies of nature from the human standpoint, as usually committed between man and man? I could not even dream that an arrangement such as proposed, could become a possibility among the average members of the human family. It can only be possible with such as we. Boiled

down, it means purely and simply, we take a gamble with each other under a solemn compact that 'each will do his best endeavor', and believing in each other as we do, can consider the gamble only in how well equipped or adapted we are, to the line of our choice, where all will make some mistakes and that is the only item of gamble, other than life, which we shall all have insured by the tenor of the compact, soon after we have placed the proposition in full operation.

"Now," continues Wesley, "I propose we take this matter under serious consideration until after graduation, and not discuss the matter between ourselves or anyone else in meantime, but not neglect to dig up all and every point possible concerning it, both pro and con, for our careful consideration. After we are free from school another session similar to the present one shall be held, to compare notes and take such action as the facts and the evidence shall warrant and demand, and now, what say ye, my hearties?" "Amen and Amen," shout Jonas and Basil, and the meeting adjourns.

The school day graduation has now taken place, and the field for life's battle is opening before the youth of our story. The girls born in those days and reared in country villages of that type, had not to earn their own livelihood, the parents were generally well to do and the girls were expected to assist in the housework. Hired domestics were not considered a necessary appendage, in true parley, the good housewife of those days was not to become a servant, as many have later, she was mistress supreme and generally had daughters, who were not offended if mama invited them to assist. They were not brought up or were not allowed to come up, in ignorance of ways and means to serve themselves and theirs, they were quite as refined, healthy, and happy, imparting fully as much good sense and taste to those with whom they associated, as those of later birth who consider the kitchen as "no place for this lady, if you please."

This pretty well describes the stock now about to go out into the world, to meet the duties of life as they shall find them, such as these are to become the wives that are to make, or unmake, successes or failures in the careers of our "Triple Alliance," with whom who shall say "failure."

During several weeks after graduation, social functions of all descriptions are plenty and of the rare sort, for these boys and girls are just out of school, and what can hold them down, a party here, a romp there, a ride and a private stroll, a snug tete-a-tete in the arbor near the garden wall, a dance, a surprise party, and on a Sunday, a treat from the parson at the old "meetin' house" on the hill, with also the evening service, followed by "May I have the pleasure of escorting you home?" and the happy reply, "I don't care if you do," or any other way to put it, so that "the young swain gets there."

The pairs as had been made up in the home school, have not forgotten their mates while away at tuition school, the girls have not cared to be forgotten and the boys have not even dreamed of forgetting them, and give the girls no time to forget them. It might be said, Uncle Sam is indebted quite some to these people for his postal revenue, indirectly perhaps to "Cupid," the old sorcerer, who neglects not his full duty towards those who come under his spell and whose subjects are never allowed to loiter at will.

It is now time for the adjourned meeting of our triplet friends and they happily repair to the trysting place. Not one word has been spoken between them concerning the matter in hand, since they left the place before upon adjournment. Each one has discussed the matter somewhat with his favorite girl, enjoining, however, the greatest of secrecy, and for once, it has been strictly maintained, and so much so, that the girls never mention it between themselves.

While formal engagements have not actually been

effected, pretty conclusive understandings there are between those composing the couples, but each girl guards her own secret with jealous pride, if secret it can be termed, after having been so much in the company of her young swain. Of course the people of the village need not to be informed as to what might be going on, an announcement of their engagements would not surprise anybody, it has already grown to be an old story, completely worn out and seeded, therefore, there is no business for "Madam Grundy," she is outclassed this time of a certain, thus these young people are jointly and severally let alone, a very unusual occurrence in a country town.

The boys discuss for a long time the serious matter that has brought them together, they have threshed the matter out thoroughly and to a finish in private assembly, while all have decided that they can make it work. There are questions and statements, opinions and otherwise, that are entered into and carefully gone over, moreover, each one has learned that he can have a small amount of capital to start the game off with, whenever he shall find a safe and proper proposition to engage in.

It is for the boys to now draw up an agreement or compact between them, setting forth the tenets of procedure for the first few years, or until they have obtained a footing sufficient to incorporate, what shall be known as "The Triple Alliance," which shall be the parent of the three enterprises and the one to whom all surplus profits shall go.

At this juncture the parents of these enterprising chums, are informed of the compact they have entered into, but Farmer Kent and the quarryman, are greatly skeptical and endeavor to dissuade them, from what they term an "impossible arrangement." "Why," exclaims Farmer Kent, "such a contrivance as that, was never before by man thought out; why, it is against any type of human nature that ever was created, you

will all be by the ears in less than the small end of no time, it can't be done, I tell you, boy, it can't be done."

"But," replies Jonas, "we've held together all these years in school and think quite as much of each other as ever. We believe we are so constituted and so completely understand each other, that we can harmoniously trudge along and do better united than singly. Believing we are, that in the near future the most successful business, will be transacted upon 'big business' principles, that the days of small units in commercial enterprise are rapidly passing, that a 'unity of interests' is approaching popularity. Where one unit has heretofore grubbed along, three or more associated units will command a very material advantage, as each unit can be utilized in benefiting the others. Is it not said two heads are better when associated, than when acting independently, even if both are 'leather heads' complete?"

One day the parents of these young hopefuls accidentally meet upon the street, when the conversation soon turns to the unique proposition of their boys. Soon there appears a difference of opinion among these men staid and true, which may be considered but a natural sequence as people go, for how often do three people exactly agree upon any one point, and yet, our reader will likely surmise, that is about what our trio of youth are going to attempt, but it is not what they are proposing, however. The compact between them calls for no agreement whatever in matters of detail in any material way, each one will be monarch absolute of all he surveys in his own field of operations, and is not to receive dictation in any degree whatever, from either of his co-associates.

These parents have not inspected the compact drawn up by the boys, thus have but the ordinary traits of human nature to base their opinions upon, however, they have known that the boys are very fond

of each other and have always been in perfect accord, yet it is difficult indeed for them to realize, that they are materially different from the average. Quarryman Hart, however, seems much inclined to let the boys try the game out, considering it certainly a novel proposition and believing he can see good points involved. Finally, proposing to the others that each hand over to his own boy a sum as a "majority endowment," with an agreement to lend their name for an equal amount, when the boys have established a footing each in their own line, that will warrant and secure the loan. After some further argument and urging by the contractor, the others jocularly consent to his proposal.

The amount of endowment fund decided upon, as looked upon in later days, is modest indeed, but these solid old citizens believe that a boy will result much better, with a little to start with than with surplus at hand. Farmer Kent ejaculates, "Nobody ever gave me any capital to start out on, except that old farm all mortgaged up and run-down, with an old gray mare spavined all over, and a wheezer besides, with all of this added to a yaller gander and two spotted geese, with a heifer cow that was about my own age, having so few teeth that we had to mush her feed. This, I say, was about what come my way as an endowment. But times are changed a good lot since them days, so perhaps I ought to do better than that by my boy Jonas, but, my gaddy, if Jonas makes a failure of it, it will discourage my ambition and about crack my poor old heart. My daughter Charity considers me pretty far gone, when I will consent to help on such a wild and weird scheme as that. She says it would help me more in after life, to give that money to some of them missioner fellers, but as to that, I cal'late our 'meetin' house' comes afore of them missioners, if it comes down to the nice point of either one of 'em."

Contracter Carter said: "I had to start with nothing and I have managed, by shrewd figuring and hard

work, to keep what I started with and I hope Basil will do as well in proportion. Anyhow, I believe he should have a chance and if he fails to make good, it will show him about what his level is, then if he makes a new start will perhaps show up some better. My brother Amos come out rattling hard on me for nearing second childhood, saying, 'I believe that the court orter put a conversator on top of you, and I think perhaps it will do little harm if it puts on two. It has been said, you know, that "misery loves company," and that is how them crazy looney boys have worked on your sympathies and intelligence, until they have manufactured a looney out of you'. If that boy fails to make good, ther'll never be no more peace within my humble threshold."

The quarryman had his troubles also, concerning that "endowment policy." Aunt Eunice, a maiden sister, was often heard from upon occasions and here was an occasion that loaded her up. After hearing all about the proposition of the boys and then that "endowment giving," as she termed it, she proceeded to shoot off her rapid firers, thusly: "Now, Silas Hart, I am going to tell you something, I have stood serenely by you for several sun-ups and looked on to some of the goings on that have been a going on, and when a man, a man, Silas Hart, of your pretended caliber of important importance, has gone and procured by 'some mysterious process' and then reared, a boy, who has already proved to have more wits than his father, and that boy has creditably passed through his degredation exercises and received a deplomatic equipment, all sot out on parchment, and then formed a junction with two other classmates and former playmates, to sally forth into the busy world and make something worth having of themselves, you, you, Silas Hart, have the audacious audacity, to combine a combination with Farmer Kent and that contractor, to endow an endowment upon those darling boys,

who have exhibited ambition enough to be ambitious, of the immense sum of two thousand dollars, expecting them, Silas Hart, to go out with that and conquer the world, a princely sum that, indeed, why don't you tell them to try hard and see how much of it they can bring back after they have conquered it? A nice sendoff that, Silas Hart, you had better take note that if an ignominious and total failure just happens to happen, you can thank yourself and your liberal cohorts for so pleasing a result. Further, if those ambitious boys had no greater mental capacity than their liberal sires, the allowance would probably suffice, and that is where, Silas Hart, the troublesome trouble altogether gets abroad. Your appreciation don't appreciate worth a cent, just because you started with nothing and ended in the same spot, means nothing, it requires but little real man to do that homely trick, you can't possibly conceive that a brighter mind might fit larger conditions and environments. I possess not a whole lot of good resources, all, every bit, in my own right altogether, but if the well wishers of Jonas Kent and Basil Carter will keep their full end up, 'I, Eunice Hart, spinster', will add to Wesley's pile already promised, 'a whole thousand dollars'. Now, Silas Hart, you can see where appreciation can appreciate, and 'I, Eunice Hart, spinster,' am willing to gamble that 'The Triple Alliance', will make good and later shame these men with such mysterious ways, all out of a happy countenance."

The quarryman maintains an amused smile throughout the taking this dose of gossipy medicine, he long ago learned that when "Aunt Eunice" talks, she rapidly says things, and now, although much surprised at her siding this way, that she has put things together in so practical and interesting a manner concerning himself and his associates, that he must now believe that they have probably, made no mistake in granting the endowment and perhaps as she has said, it has

been a trifle too small, but eases off his conscience a bit with the thought, that when the boys get well started we can if necessary hand over another slice.

The days and evenings rapidly passed with much a doing among the young folks; it had become generally known throughout the town, that Basil, Wesley and Jonas were to leave town, in search of something in which to permanently engage.

Thus far, the endowment proposition has remained a secret and it was intended to have it so remain, for the present at least; that it was a private matter anyway and so did not belong to the public, but the public wondered, nevertheless, what else could they do, other than to enter the employ of others?

The best girl of each boy was also very much exercised at the prospect, one remarked "that it is really a gamble as to where will be our future homes." Janice Kent reluctantly assumed, that the wild and woolly west, in the fastnesses of some gigantic mountain, was for hers, while Sybil Carter seemed certain to inhabit, the low and boundless plains of some distant state, but Betty Hart might be called upon to stay anywhere or all over, as Basil's whereabouts were altogether uncertain.

These young people were fond of each other as accident had paired them off, but they were young when that had first occurred, and were some shifting to occur in these premises, under these conditions it would not establish a precedent and mayhap, something of the kind may here come to pass, as is sometimes said:

"A naughty slip between the cup and the lip,
Can set people going, a-flip-er-ty flip."

One day the boys met at the old trysting place to consider plans for embarkation. It had been decided that each should in his own way, time and direction,

sally forth and absolutely alone, each entirely independent of the others, select his own opportunity, enter into the game as he may and at the end of one year, each and all return to their own homes for a reunion visit and to report.

This last formal business interview continues for several hours, there is much to be said between them, and really, it is a most serious interview. Here are three lifelong chums about to separate and leave their old moorings, to float out upon the sea of life and, for the better or worse, meet the unknown as they shall find it. These boys are comparatively fresh, their experience has been but a limited one, and yet, they imagine it much greater than they afterward are forced to estimate it, when learning that one can never properly place one's abilities and acquirements, before having witnessed a fair average of others, as they are to be found away from their own stamping ground. Thus these boys are to learn much and profit greatly, by what they observe during the next twelve months, probably finding that this year of exploration, is to prove for them the greatest educator of their lives, especially so in a practically commercial sense.

These three boys possess book learning sufficient, but book learning alone to take out into the wide world is a poor asset, with which to meet and conquer the complications of a busy business life.

These boys are as nearly equally equipped mentally and physically, as well can be brought about, while morally and financially, they each are the other's equal also. None have any bad habits whatsoever, even all abhor the use of tobacco and each is known to have, much the same regard and consideration for religious requirements. Although none are members of any church, they respect the profession of religion in others, and themselves are sticklers complete concerning all moral obligations, but dare not join a church of God, fearing they are not more able to cope with evil

influences, than some of their acquaintances whom they believe commit sacrilege, in assuming to hold such position and follow divine precepts, arguing, that hypocrisy in any cause overshadows all other sins in their estimation, also claiming for themselves, that no man can accuse them of a wrong act in their dealings thus far with whomsoever. This, then, is the type of character that these boys are going out into the wide world with.

The coming year is to be for these boys a year entirely given over to prospecting, although before the year is complete one or more of them, may have selected his baby and commenced its rearing. It is not incumbent upon them, however, to actually commence operations for commercial progress, until after the next official meeting.

They possess much memoranda of how their separate enterprises are to effect the joint interests, and through what relationship, but have not yet drawn up the formal compact, that is to be formulated at the next meeting, when they will have become much better acquainted, with the details and environments of each proposition.

The further have matters progressed and been talked over, the greater has become the interest of the parents, while now that the boys are about to leave their homes, the discouragement heretofore so lavishly indulged in, has turned about face to pleasing and helpful encouragement. The parents especially becoming much exercised concerning this novel proposition, it is believed to be exceptionally original, nothing of the kind ever before having been suggested so far as known by those concerned, thus is curiosity certain to run high, not only concerning the success of the enterprise in general, but as to which of the boys will achieve the greater success, and thus be able to contribute the greater amount to the general fund, known as the parent of the enterprising family; none can

forecast a possibility, however, inasmuch as the selection involved, differs so greatly in possible expenses and profits. Mayhap one will say, "The mining proposition" is much more of a gamble than the others, and that to win in that, will involve much in the nature of luck, rather than in ability and tact exhibited in general management. Perhaps the ranch proposition may be considered much less a gamble than either of the others, but one will be likely to ascribe to this, profits greatly less proportionate with expense and risk. Again, the one taking up railroading may or may not find an opening in which, with the limited amount of capital available, he can acquire a sufficient interest to gain control and management, which he must do to be in position to carry out the compact made with the others. Thus, these several kinds of propositions are well known to the average public, as being wealth producers in quite different degrees, but ignorant complete are the unsophisticated, concerning profits that may accrue therefrom.

A mine, generally speaking, if anything, is a great thing, and when not a great thing, then nothing.

A ranch, is generally a pretty safe affair, but a long time is consumed in development to a profit basis.

A railroad, is generally considered safe enough, but many are the perplexities and disappointing endeavors, between the joyful start and the goal of control, without which, it can contribute nothing to help forward our "Triple Alliance", while our boys are out to ascertain which may be able to contribute the greater, to the profit fund of their cherished alliance, each one being determined to eventually surpass his associates in support of the alliance fund.

A day has been appointed when the boys shall depart, they really are reluctant, the reflection that they are breaking away from the old moorings is not a pleasing one to them. Here, among relatives and ac-

quaintances, have they lived their lives thus far in pleasure alone, theirs has not been the responsible position, it having been no part of theirs to provide even for themselves. They are now to drift for awhile at least, much as a derelict upon the wide, wide sea, with no special objective point in view, but wherever curiosity, luck, or inclination shall direct, moreover, they are out for what? Whenever pausing to consider the purpose of this extended trip, it certainly saddens this trio of youthful hearts.

Brothers and sisters, parents and all tender associations are being left behind. The frolics of old school days and early manhood are being cast off, as among the has-beens of a happy existence. The young ladies of their preference are with fond thoughts, to be left behind to while away the time as best they may, while the boys uppermost in their thoughts, are supposedly abroad in the land seeking opportunity, wherein to settle down for acquirement of a livelihood and to provide a home, a suitable home, for the ladies of their choice, a fireside for those whom nature shall kindly and reverently add to their families, as time shall roll pleasantly and profitably along.

During the last week at home, the boys are much of the time in company with the lady of their choice, who shall say, or even guess, what may have passed between them what vows are made and promises taken, how great the sadness inhabiting their tender and inexperienced hearts.

Little of tender sentiment is employed in the writing of this life story, that being largely left to the tender imagination of the reader. This being not a full-fledged love story, the absence of excessively tender sentiment can be excused, because being substituted by material considered more interesting. The practical life of these young people, with the very unusual endeavor enacted being the proper subject matter, we

can but moderately touch upon the sentimental and be not harshly censured for the infraction.

The morning arrives for the young adventurers to depart. They are to journey together as far as New York city, then, after a day in doing the city, are to take leave of each other for the full period of one year. Who shall attempt to follow them, who shall imagine what are the vicissitudes they shall encounter, what bitterness may worm its way into their hearts, whether self-reproaches or others shall torment their souls? Stop and ponder a bit, dear reader, upon the peculiar undertaking herewith undertaken.

The goodbys are expressed in much the same manner as is usual upon such occasions, the mothers of the boys appear to take the parting the more seriously, as a fact, they completely break down, words will not come through their lips, but rivers of tears burst forth from their eyes; it is indeed a sad and affecting sight to behold, this first real parting to return no more forever as of old, no more ever to be considered as the home of these venturesome boys.

It is these sensitive features, that so strongly come home to the aching hearts of these fond mothers. A person with a less tender heart than a mother, may imagine this scene to be overdrawn, but have such ever been present upon a like occasion?

The young people enact naturally the parting scene at the railroad station; many in the village have learned of the departure and a large crowd has assembled as they declare, to see the boys off and give them "a hearty godspeed."

Quite generally it has become known that they are going off together to act in concert, in some enterprise that they may select, but further than that none are able to go.

The girls being sisters, as well as sweethearts of the boys, are at full liberty, by common consent, to act as loving and affectionate as they are wont to do,

causing no unfavorable comments, however much tenderness may be displayed. With no conventional handicap present the girls neglect not their opportunity, to give and take whatever may be going and coming.

The toot and the ring, out and off to pastures new, ride the future proprietors of our "Triple Alliance," leaving those remaining behind to wonder with fond hopes, for the safety and success of those young adventurers, whom all are believing will eventually make good.

It is said that some of the girls repaired to their rooms and just had a good cry, then came forth with brave hearts to await the coming of news from the front, as though their heroes had gone forth to battle, which in very truth they had, but to battle in commerce for gold, instead of in war for blood.

It was indeed lonesome, after the departure of those three boys, for really taken as a whole, they had been much toward the sum total in the social life of that grand old town. Never had there been anything of a public character in a social or entertaining way that they, as a whole, had not contributed largely to make a success, often originating the affair themselves. Upon no occasion whatever can it be remembered that they had not been involved. One had never been suggested for anything in any way alone, it being generally known throughout the village, that "one in, all in" and "one out, all out," was ever the slogan with that trinity of boys, while they severally and collectively, really could appreciate no other way to deport themselves.

These boys had no enemies in the village, although much innocent mischief was pulled off by them during school days. The people all liked these boys and it was believed the well wishes and godspeed given at their departure, was a sentiment universally and sincerely handed out; none doubted their ability and disposition to make good in their present endeavor.

After the boys had departed, the girls heretofore so closely in touch with the "Triple Alliance," seemed to nestle more closely together than before the boys had departed, on the principle, perhaps, that "misery loves company" or, "sympathy desires to sympathize." They were much together and it may be guessed, that sometimes remarks were dropped between them concerning the boys, for nature is ever bound to assert its right and what more natural, than an occasional thought of the absent ones, when they might consider their own welfare involved in the purpose of this absence?

Janice, Sybil and Betty, being perhaps the more involved, and yet, Bella was alway present with them, for the twins were seldom apart, and so strongly allied it was often remarked, that however in the wide world will they manage to receive courting attentions from male associates, while, with the understanding that was supposed to be present between Betty and Basil, however was it brought about? Some suggested, it was consummated through a dumb language expressed with the eyes. While no actual engagement was known to exist, this mode of communication could be made to accomplish the trick, even in the presence of a third party, but Bella did not consider she was a third party, for it had seemed to make little difference to Basil, which of the twins he happened to be with, as a fact, it may be doubted if he ever knew which one it was.

None there were in the village who could positively identify these girls, being an exact copy of each other, and knowing it so well themselves, they would as often answer to one name as another. whenever it became essential to employ a name, generally, however, it was simply Miss Hart, and all seemed satisfied with that. These girls not only exactly resembled each other in appearance, but as closely they resembled each other in disposition,

movements, voice, likes and dislikes, thus, upon many occasions, Basil had, as he supposed, been out with Betty, when, in fact, it had been Bella. It cannot be said, however, that he had any preference, because he frankly confessed that he could discover nothing to prefer, while had he been required to make a definite choice, he undoubtedly would have agreed to flip up a penny, abide the result, and then have been obliged to tag the one chosen.

During the demonstration of the parting at the railroad station, there had been no perceptible difference in the affection exhibited, between Basil and either of the twins; it was simply a case of no distinction, either with or without a difference and much curiosity was abroad among the people, even with the parents of the interested parties, as to what may be the final outcome. Jonus and Wesley often put it over on Basil, who always took it in good part by venturing, "I guess a day will come when it will properly work itself out, but whichever way the scales tip, I consider I shall obtain full weight." All curiosity comers were generally treated to something of this sort, regarding the courting endeavor of Basil, but one day his mother made a remark that Basil was well providing for himself, when she said, "I feel no concern whatever for Basil, so long as he plays a Hart, the game for him will be a winner."

Altogether speaking, the material available among this youthful combination of boys and girls, can be moulded into a general mix-up of complicated relationship and not exhaust completely, the limit of genius that might be employed, while many times and often has it been observed that:

The early plans of men and mice,
Often change for something nice,
For who can tell, and who can name,
The final end of a courting game?

Aunt Eunice having remained rather uninitiated

in the "courting game," as generally carried on among young people, had often expressed her doubts of the wisdom in letting those twins go about all dressed alike; she always had said, some day it will make trouble for somebody and very likely they will share in it. Often had Aunt Eunice suggested that if they must be dressed alike, they should be tagged in some way for identification, but so long as only Basil entered the game, and he being but a partial counterpart of Wesley, the matter worried about by Aunt Eunice, had been allowed to slip along. All, however, had personally conceded that a day will come, when a distinction with a difference will assert its right, foiling the plan of nature to allow of no distinction.

The twins themselves have always greatly enjoyed the perplexity, others have experienced concerning their identity, often allowing the wrong impression to carry for a while, while more especially pleasing has it been among their male friends, when often the ludicrous becomes prominent, sometimes to the discomfiture of a devoted young swain.

These girls were a lively set altogether and the twins afforded the others much opportunity, to perpetrate a good joke upon a victim of perplexity. Moreover, the girl associates were often themselves deceived and liable, to address by the wrong name; generally, however, it made little difference as applicable to one, applicable to the other as well or better, while the frolic trips merrily along.

The absence of the especial male friends of these frolicking girls, does not preclude their presence in all attempts at social intercourse, they were present at all such functions and so jolly and witty, that they could not possibly be spared. Often was it remarked that without the presence of the Hart twins, a vacancy sure enough there would be present, moreover, the young men of the town so greatly enjoyed

the lively society of these girls, that should the departed adventurers neglect to ever return, but meager would be their regrets, especially so, perhaps, of one Basil Carter of the "Triple Alliance."

Withal, but one of the twins is supposed to be claimed by Basil, but however in the world are we to know which? exclaims one. When not knowing which, however can we keep off the grass, and not keeping off the grass will be dangerous when that Alliance returns, meanwhile the girls are greatly enjoying the uncertain situation.

Many unexpected and ludicrous happenings are each day cheerily pulled off, generally prompted by the frolicking twins, who never seem weary of well-doing in the cause of frolic. Charity Kent, however, strongly expressed her estimation of such goings on, remarking one day to the good parson of the "meetin' house": "Sir, it is downright wicked for those Hart girls to thus masquerade, each under the colors of the other, to deceive every good intentioned person that comes along. It is just abominable, completely so, and the good Lord will certainly punish all who aid and abet such goings on. Why, they are just making complete fools of folks, and I say it is a burning shame".

"But", replied the parson, "the big book says, 'Judge not that ye be not judged'. Are not the Hart girls the very image that God made them? Can the leopard change his spots, and can you specify any really wrong act they have committed? Were you either one of them, would you become a recluse and entirely avoid people, because God had fashioned you after another, in a manner to make you unidentifiable among men? Now then, He, having done this to suit His own purpose, would you, then, endeavor to thwart His plans to satisfy a whim of your own? If so, who could be obliged to carry the greater guilt? Admitting that you would not do this, how

different would or could you deport yourself, than do those whom you are accusing?"

Charity liked not this short, terse sermon and retorted: "I suppose I am in the wrong, I generally am and wish I could hold my tongue. I guess I came upon earth at much too late a day and generation, that the present pace of the world is much too fast for one, who generally regards the fitness of things, while believing she controls the courage of her own convictions, and should not be blamed, because she cannot make a faulty wrong appear to her as a righteous right."

The parson retorted, "Look after thine own fences , Charity, and donate the same privilege to thy neighbors."

Soon after leaving Charity, the parson met Amos Carter and Amos also was much perturbed, at the way certain young people are deporting themselves, singling out "them deceivin' twins" by asking the parson, "Is it not a part of your duty to check sech goin's on in this 'ere village? Actually now, I believe these twin girls are as guilty as ever Peter was, when he caused the cock to crow, for they are practicing as much deceitful deceit as Peter did and are betrayers of every distinctive definement, that their sex has been endowed with by Almighty God, all intended to serve a better purpose, than a flirtin' with decent and desirable young men, who are too unlucky to keep out of their fascinating fascinations and go by on the t'other side. I sympathize much greatly with such as cannot leave such rubbish, to the dogs of credulity, or perhaps it is frivolity, I don't think it makes much difference which."

The good parson is now wearing a broad smile and this pleases Amos, thinking he has made a good hit, which appears to him as having pleased the parson, until the parson reminds him that "the dogs of war are ever upon the track of innocence, with the accusation of ignorance the incentive of their tongues." Wondering just what that meant, Amos departed.

CHAPTER II

SEARCHING FOR BABIES

The members of "The Triple Alliance" had separated, the second morning after arriving in New York. They parted with every aspiration of hope and courage, they were truly now sauntering forth to pastures new and worlds unknown in their limited experience, each at first to make for himself a footing upon which to stand and engage in the life work, of contributing to the support of "The Triple Alliance."

As they participated in the parting handshake, it was believed they each possessed the same degree of ambition and desire to equal, if not excel, the success of his associates. Each had schooled himself up to a point of determination to win out and thus, had fortified himself as best he knew how to successfully meet and conquer, whatever adverse conditions shall cross his pathway, while each one realized the great responsibility resting upon his first business act, i. e., the selection of his "stamping ground," and each well knew that upon this, his success as a unit of "The Triple Alliance", and incidentally, "The Triple Alliance" itself depended.

Whether or not the reader will be able to fully realize the sum total of the difficulties, likely to environ these ambitious and truly persistent characters, may depend largely upon whatever has been his observations and actual experience, with the commerically intriguing world as generally conducted, through the practice of the "hard crusted solons" in dealing with youth, who have been righteously and innocently endowed, with a high degree of moral principle and honesty of purpose.

It is this point that should concern the friends

of these boys, who had wished them a kindly godspeed and set themselves at the annoying task, of "watchful waiting" for results from the battle. These elderly people had long ago learned, to their sorrow, that Satan is ever pressing forward, in the garb of a human form, the most atrocious practices possible in pursuit of "mammon, the god of the evil one," and they also realized, with many forebodings that these innocent boys could not avoid meeting the intrigue, that will be forced upon them through their ignorance, by the "human hog", and often be obliged to pay tribute where tribute should not be due. It is this point that the writer endeavors to emphasize, fair play receives no consideration whatever from the "human hog," thus when our boys later meet and conquer him with the high principled tactics, they know no better than to use, verily, the gods of heaven and earth as well, sit up and shout, "To the worthy conquerer belong the spoils."

(Basil)

The wanderings of Basil seem to attract our attention first. He had gone north from New York city with the idea that Northern New York state might afford something in the line of opportunities, for the promotion of some type of transportation, thinking perhaps there might be localities bordering upon the lakes, where a railway of some sort had been overlooked, in the development of the rural country thereabouts.

The further he went and the more he saw, the more difficult it appeared to him to obtain what he desired, for it seemed that every corner possessed worlds of people, who seemed to have a full equipment in transportation. It was surprising to Basil, how completely the country seemed supplied, with all necessary and perhaps superfluous means of transportation. Often the thoughts of Basil, when traveling across country, would revert to the query,

"Have all such opportunities as I am in pursuit of been pre-empted? Is this great country already complete? What then, is to be the prospect for yet unborn generations, what chance for the young man of the future to gain more than a livelihood? However can ambition be satisfied? He who inherits or acquires ambition and enterprise, will become of no greater benefit to the world, than he of the mud shovel brigade, commercial genius will count for but little and with such a prospect, every human being will be entitled to sympathy and even pity, for having the ill luck of having been born."

But these morbid thoughts served not to produce regret or discouragement. Basil was yet bigger than such conclusions could encompass, the determination with which he had started out, could battle miles of such appearances, there were, and he well believed there were, many better things available than those he had jotted down. Somewhere, some opportunity even up to his size, was yet awaiting the coming of a developing character, with arms extended and crying out, "Come hither, good Samaritan, and take me in, for I know I am worthy of your noble consideration, I know I can satisfy even your ambition and make good, your high ideals of being serviceable to the world."

As Basil travelled onward, he often jotted down some data which it is not essential to reproduce here. When out about two months he found himself in the metropolis of Colorado. Here he mused, "is a stunning city, a live town indeed, I would not object to coming here, but here are present sufficient live wires to discover everything worth having, and thus it can be no suitable place for Basil Carter, who desires not a common business proposition. That will not fill the bill that I have to fill, the proposition that I must secure must be original, for anything I can

turn in to the 'Triple Alliance' must come through and under my own control."

Basil had certainly taken over a big contract in selecting his line, each day he had come to realize it more and more, but daunted he was not for yet one good while.

Basil was out, however, to obtain the best the country had to offer; in fact, he knew he had to find the best possible, realizing he had a smart task before him, to finance a proposition of this kind and must have good talking points, as well as a base for a good proposition. He was familiar enough with human nature to understand, that people do not easily part with their money, while to carry out a proposition of this kind needed much of the public's money, and he possessed not money influence sufficient to lead them along. Leaving Basil at this point in his exploring task, to hunt up one of the others, we decide to, for awhile, follow the meanderings of

(Wesley)

Wesley Hart had seemed throughout school life the more venturesome of the three, and it was he who had proposed this unusual and original community of interests, and the selection he made of his life's work would with many, bear out the belief that this trait of hazard was inherent with him to quite a degree, that mining is but a gambler's tool that no conservative person will attempt to play with. However, it is a well-known fact among intelligence, that many a man has met this tool to great advantage in acquiring wealth and influence, that otherwise would never have been his. The successful mining adherent well knows, that adverse comments concerning mining are conceived in ignorance, born of cowardice and reared in jealousy, all being used in the cussedness, which comes from deciding a case before having heard the evidence, therefore employing ignorance as the judge.

Wesley had parted with the others it might be said, in higher spirits perhaps proportionately with what he considered, the possibilities of his chosen line over the lines selected by the others. He believed a mining proposition to be, with proper and frugal management, capable of returning much greater profits, than possible with any other commercial line, and his audible thought was, "I believe I shall beat you both, in my contribution to 'The Triple Alliance'."

How different were the environments sought for in Wesley's sojourn, than were those which Basil desired to find. Basil must have population and business already located, before his chosen line could be made productive. Wesley was to tackle nature, crude nature in the crudest of its natural haunts, the environments must naturally and logically be distinctly unrefined, and greatly isolated from pleasing society, thus it meant, literally speaking, that as ordinarily located and prosecuted, the chosen calling of Wesley Hart naturally prescribed, a separation from many of the agreeable things in ordinary routine of life, that Wesley Hart had habitually and delightedly enjoyed, but Wesley was determinedly loyal to the cause of his choosing, even were he obliged to locate remote from his preference. But to compensate in some degree at least was the satisfaction, that his chosen business was of an original type and depended not upon the past efforts of man. The real base of the business of others must come from the product of his, especially if he selected a gold mine, and then, the monetary value of all minerals, exerts much influence in the business market of the world, and Wesley audibly mused, "Much of the volume and condition of business in general, depends upon the storehouse of nature, all must come back to Mother Earth for the base of supplies."

Nearly five months of Wesley's allotted time had passed and nothing tangible, had he to exhibit even

to himself, but he was now within the sacred neighborhood of the Rocky mountains.

What Wesley had in mind was to secure something he could capitalize if possible, and so obtain an addition to his comparatively small pile, with which he could hasten matters and not be too far in the rear of the others, when getting into position to contribute toward the nest egg of "The Triple Alliance." This feature of the case must not be overlooked, although it had been considered by the boys, that it might require a longer time to place upon an earning footing one proposition than another, yet each had an ambition to arrive on time.

Wesley really had a preference for the gold digging proposition, there seemed to him a fascination in that which other minerals did not inspire, however, he could not afford to follow a whim too far, unless showing advantages.

A little more than six months from the parting of the boys, Wesley found himself at Denver, Colorado, and realized he was in the much coveted gold district. After selecting his hotel and having been there a few days, he chanced to turn the leaves of the register upon the office counter. Often had he done this trick, but perhaps he could give no satisfactory reason had he been asked for one, and yet, why should he do it? These were pages completed long weeks ago, but what was his surprise, when turning over a leaf, to discover right there, before his very eyes and at the top of the page, "Basil Carter, Greenville, Mass." Here was food for thought and interesting information, too, here had been his dear chum, here he had placed his hand, here he had left his mark and here he had been searching for "his baby." What could have been his success, partial or complete, and Wesley fell to wondering as to the progress of both his associates.

Denver being a city that especially interests strangers, Wesley here found much to interest him and

had been there about two weeks, when casting his eyes along the columns of a paper, he espied an item that caused him to stop and ponder a bit. Why not investigate, certainly there may be a temporary opportunity in that to rake in a profit.

For some time past, Wesley's expenses had worried him a bit, his two thousand dollars were being eaten into, faster than he desired to contemplate and here seemed a chance to—well—it was a gamble, but really, Wesley exclaims, "Am I not out for something of that character, whatever I do must of necessity be a gamble, unless I shall enter the employ of another, and that, under the circumstances, is logically not a possible thing to do."

Well, what had Wesley noticed that should cause him thus to muse? The item was an advertisement, inserted in the reading matter and formulated as news matter. Wesley had, since arriving in Denver, made perhaps several quite intimate acquaintances, two of them appeared to be quite fond of him and he also liked them. He had first met them all in the hotel lobby through casual self-introduction, they had been out together at the theaters and for drives around the country and all seemed to be socially inclined, however, Wesley endeavored to be a better listener than talker, these fellows being residents of the city, he reasoned, it is for them to disclose its secrets and its advantages, I am out for points and not to give them. Wesley was quite reticent as to himself and his circumstances, as well as his purpose in being present in the city, least of all did he divulge any thought, that might lead them to suspect he had any money aboard.

The following day after Wesley had noticed the newspaper item, one of his new-found chums remarked to another one: "Say, Bob, did you see that item in last night's Globe, offering Old Man Hunt's property way out Third Street, for sale?

"Why, no," replied Bob, "what are they selling for?"

"Why, it reads on account of old age, the old man is getting well along and you know there is no younger generation, probably thinks he might well take the good of what there is before passing."

"Well, Jack, had I the money I would try to worm into that, some day not far ahead either, the Gas and Electric Company are going to need that property, what they own there now, will not be sufficient upon which to carry out the plans, I understand they are making for the future."

"Yes, Bob, I have heard something about that too, and I wish I had the money, suppose we could together rake up enough money to satisfy him, perhaps there is a mortgage on it for some amount, how much can you find, Bob?"

"I have only five hundred in sight," replied Bob.

"That amount," replied Jack, "is about my size, so I guess we won't go far in that direction, until we can swap something for somebody's money, but it is a good gamble for some fortunate chap."

While they were talking thus, in came another of Wesley's new-found friends and the others, put the proposition up to him to join them and pool their issues.

"By jove," he replied, "that is a good one all right, if the price is not unreasonable, but I can hardly pull more than a thousand and I am afraid we can't put the thing over."

Wesley had listened to all this with greater interest than he had allowed to appear upon the surface, really he had assumed an indifferent attitude, but as the wicked fellow had once exclaimed, "He kept up a devil of a thinking." Soon two of the number departed, when in a casual indifferent manner, Wesley inquired of the other, "Wherever in this great city, is this property located, suppose likely it must be well out?"

"Oh yes," was the reply, "four miles or more, but the city is growing fast in that direction."

"Is it a valuable property, or of the cheaper class?" inquired Wesley.

The reply was, "four to five thousand probably would be the price now, but it is worth it and more, too."

"Well," indifferently replied Wesley, "there are probably a plenty who will go after it."

"I don't know about that," returned the other, "it may lock up the money for several years, one can never tell about unproductive property here in the west, as a fact, the buildings involved are worth but little, the old man has never renewed anything."

"Is he a man of means?" inquired Wesley.

"Yes," was the reply, "fairly well to do, anyway."

Wesley's company soon departed and so did he, but in a very different direction and probably upon a vastly different errand.

Wesley soon approached the clerk at the desk and inquired about Third Street and the proper way to get out to its end, learning that a trolley car line went through Fourth Street to its far end, and soon he was on the line.

One hour later, Wesley found himself looking over the neighborhood of the property for sale. He inquired of a man passing where was the residence of Jabez Hunt, who he believed was a resident of that neighborhood, then inquired about the ownership of the property adjoining and was told, that the Gas and Electric Company owned the piece on the north side.

"Who, then," inquired Wesley, "might own that vacant lot beyond?"

"I understand," was the reply, "that it is under the control of the same company." Wesley then walked on down the street past the property a ways, and then returning, as he neared the gateway of the Hunt place, an old man appeared at the door and came down the walk toward the gate.

"A very good morning, my friend," to Wesley,

when Wesley replied, with a very happy smile upon his countenance.

"Yes, Uncle, it really 'is a good morning' and I hope I see you well."

"Yes," replied the old man, "am well and if not so far over the divide, would yet consider myself good for some earthly purpose, but alas!"

"No, not alas, my good friend," replied Wesley, "your usefulness in this busy world is not yet complete, those gray hairs are an inspiration, they shine all over with a full equipment of honor, honesty, charity and good fellowship, I will risk the assertion that those gray hairs will not go down to the grave, with any stigma of unfavorable comment, or any lack of true and sincere regard."

"Well," remarked the old man, "I size you up as a stranger in these parts, may I be very wrong?"

"Not at all, Uncle, on the contrary you are very right. I have been stopping in the city about two weeks, my home is in old New England."

"Ah," said the old man, "I guessed it, I guessed it, I was certain there was Yankee in your make-up, you are too greatly polished and too finely moulded, to belong to the wild and woolly west, you seem to be on a trip of observation, perhaps in quest of something or somebody, mayhap I can be of service, you have but to command to the extent of my ability."

"I confess, my good friend," was the reply, "to be out on a reconnoitering excursion, and before forgetting it, may I respectfully inquire concerning the ownership of the property next north of yourself?"

"Certainly, I am pleased to tell you, that belongs to the 'Gas and Electric Company,' are you out looking for property in this direction?"

"Not especially," replied Wesley, "but always I am in the market for a good opportunity."

"Well, well," said the old man, "strange indeed that we have met just as we have. Why not put

your eyes upon my property here, it is equally as valuable with that for any purpose."

"Why, I don't know, what might be your price for the property, I am not a Vanderbilt or any other breed of millionaire, and probably I could not reach, my friend."

"Well, now, young man," replied Uncle. "I am not out now for making money, as a fact, when I was out, succeeded but meagerly, am past needing a great deal and not able to properly care for this, it is too large a place for such as I and in selling, can perhaps make myself more comfortable. The Gas people have desired to own it, but they have been so unfair and downright mean with me, in some dealings I have had with them, that I vowed I would not again deal with them. Some inquiries have been made by resident people here, but as I could not do business with them with any certainty, that they were not in some way connected with that Gas Company, I have thus far remained clear of the whole bunch. But now that you are from so far away, I can feel quite safe in dealing with you and I would be pleased, to have you consider it on a price of forty-five hundred. There is a mortgage of fifteen hundred which can remain as long as interest is kept up, so there is but three thousand to raise and it requires no millionaire to find that, I reckon."

Wesley had now obtained the whole cue of the situation and found he was outclassed; as he had but about seventeen hundred of his capital left, he believed here was a good chance, but how could he handle it, he could spare fifteen, perhaps sixteen hundred for a while probably, until he could turn it at a profit.

The old man noticed his hesitancy in replying and that he wore a more serious countenance, than he had yet seen upon him, but it was Wesley's turn and it was up to him.

Finally, as if having thrown the matter overboard, Wesley in a sort of careless manner turned the subject, and that shifted the turn regarding the property over upon the old man, who said, "Young man, you seem to regard the price too great for this property, upon what do you base your estimation of its value?"

Wesley quickly retorted, "I have not made any estimate of its real worth, my estimation has been entirely upon the worth of my present resources and the amount if needed, calls for a greater sum than my pocket possesses."

"Well," replied the old man, "how much could you spare at present?"

"Fifteen hundred," was the reply, "possibly sixteen, but that would make close work for me, I guess."

"What might be your prospects for further income," inquired the old man.

"To guess at that might prove to be a gamble, true, I expect soon to get hold of more money, but the date of realization may for a few weeks remain a problem." The old man looked Wesley straight in the eye with so piercing a look, that it greatly embarrassed him. After a minute or two, with a kindly bland sort of smile, Uncle remarked:

"Young man, in my day I have been considered an adept, at reading human nature through the countenance, I have completed my study of yours and now I am going to make you a proposition, you are a very young man, you have your pile to make and you will make it, because of the honor, integrity and uprightness I have discovered present, I don't even know your name, but I am certain I know you, now I will accept your fifteen hundred, with your note for the other fifteen payable in one year, this will find you time to even obtain the money elsewhere, or turn the property, if you wish."

"But," replied Wesley, "I should not care to take over the property with any restriction whatsoever, I should want to be free to dispose of it at will, whenever and to whomever."

Uncle retorted, "My young friend, if you buy this property, I should smile to witness dictation from anyone whatever, it is yours free and clear, except the mortgage, to dispose of or use at will. It would do my old heart good to aid such as you and I wish I were better equipped to grant you aid."

Wesley replied with a grateful countenance, wearing a happy smile. "Uncle, how can I ever substantially recoup you, for what you are proposing to do for me, a stranger, a complete stranger. I can at present only heartily thank you."

"Ah, but that is good pay, my boy," the old man retorted.

They both repaired to the city and within one hour, the papers were drawn and properly executed, conveying that property to Wesley Hart, who had been prompted to purchase it through a desire to in some way, make his expenses and thus leave his original capital intact, until such time as he should need it, in settlement for "his baby," when he shall have selected one.

Wesley now felt gloriously happy, believing as he did and had reason to, that the Gas Company would relieve him of the property at a good profit, for had not several said, that the property was worth much more than he had paid? The evening papers announced the transaction and as he sat in the hotel lobby that evening, one after another of his new acquaintances trudged along, disclosing a set of men more greatly surprised than one often encounters. As one remarked, "You sly old boy, with a right smart Yankee trick. Why, in the first place, we had not the least idea that you had money. Had we, you would have certainly been invited to join us, in secur-

ing that jolly piece of property, but here you sat, mum as a house block, ignorant, innocent, indifferent and cussed, quite ready to swoop down upon the prize coveted by many in this old city, who had not had time to reach the old man. Am wondering what the Gas and Electric Company are thinking about at this time, when learning that the prize has been carried off by a party from 'Old New England', really a d—n Yankee. Well, boy, if you manage that right, you will get your hard cash back and be glad you had the courage to visit this good old city, but 'still pigs don't get my swill again'."

The next morning, Wesley was off on the western train, he had heard of some prospectively good mining properties located south of Denver City and was intending to inspect them the following week, but now that he had purchased that Hunt property decided to leave the state at once, make his tour, and return later; he did not wish the "Gas Company" to approach him at present, it might do them good to keep them at a distance for a time, and he could do it for several months without interfering with his objective point.

(Jonas)

By this time the reader may be in a quandry as to the whereabouts of Jonas Kent, and whether he actually is, or is not, we left him in New York debating which train to take and have learned that he took the train going South, that he left that train at Washington, D. C., having the idea of doing the Capitol of the nation, before cruising about for farms in the country. We do not really imagine Jonas expected to find the object of his search, right there on Massachusetts or Pennsylvania Avenues, but as he reasoned it, a man who expects to be a real man, should be able to say he certainly has done the Capitol, even if not having shaken the hand of the President, and when again returning to Greenville, he'll have them understand, "he's just been somewhere." After doing the Capitol,

Jonas took quite a circuit through many of the southern states, but nothing especially attracted him, it was not the kind of country he had imagined he should need, in which to hunt for "his baby." After trudging along a couple of weeks, through several states east of the grand old Mississippi, the metropolis of the southwest held him a few days as he reasoned out, "principally to get my bearings."

It was now up to Jonas to decide, whether his nose should be pointed westerly or southerly, which was finally decided by an incident of accident, in the form of the general collapse of a vehicle in which he with another happened to be riding, in remote outskirts of the city of St. Louis, which necessitated quite a long walk to the nearest trolley line, and thus, these two, being thrown together through so crude a method, naturally acquired a friendship engendered through "sympathies in misfortune." Jonas found the fellow a sociable sort of a chap, while with a situation much in common to coax a fraternal feeling, they became quite familiar, and so much so that they were often together during the remainder of Jonas' stay in the city. Much had been said respecting personalities and purposes, resulting in their becoming very good friends; Jonas had learned that the home of his friend was at Joplin, the extreme western end of the state, he had come on to St. Louis to look after some property a friend of his had inherited. Jonas having decided to take the northerly route, they would travel together to Springfield Missouri, where his train branched off northerly. The stranger having learned of Jonas' mission, promised to watch out for anything in that line and would notify him if having his address at any point, thus Jonas agreed to keep him posted, with an address ahead of present location and they parted good friends.

Jonas was to ride all night on that train, thinking to hasten his progress, knowing as he did, that he had

an almost endless trip before him, having fully realized by this time, the boundless and inexhaustible country and resources of Uncle Sam's farm; true, he might soon find "his baby," and he might not for many a day or week.

Along in the night somewhere mid-way, a jerk, a pull and a twitch, and flying went the people in any old direction, with the car turning turtle as often as it could in coursing down a high embankment. Soon, a bump and they had arrived on time which had not been scheduled, but they were liable to no further head-on, for certain it was, that no other train could be coming on their track from the opposite direction, or any other for that matter; there they were in all sorts of conditions and torture. Many were injured, some were dead, and a pitiable scene indeed it was to those, who had been fortunate enough to escape injury, and Jonas was one of these. True, he had some scratches where blood was visible and running down his cheek, with one wrist badly sprained, but with this he considered not that he was injured, with others all about in much pain and calling for help.

An elderly couple had sat across the aisle from Jonas, and during the evening, quite some conversation had passed between them, to the time when their berths had been made up. Soon as they had landed all secure, Jonas at once bethought himself of this old couple and at once undertook to discover them, but one might as well search for "a needle in a haymow," as it was pitch dark and two score of people, had been tossed into a conglomerated mass of confusion, which augered not much as a result of the search. It seemed to be first come first served, one could not heartlessly walk over and across that suffering humanity, even though a brother might need his assistance badly at the other end.

After pulling out several, Jonas heard a faint cry as of one in great pain. He knew it to be the voice of

a woman and he imagined it was an elderly voice, and at the same time he discovered a cry for help that seemed a stifled utterance, as though one was put to it for breath. He worked along as best he could to reach the source of these cries, with a premonition that they came from his elderly friends, and soon he was by the side of the old man and found him snugly pinned down with a bar of wood across his neck, while had it been pressed a quarter of an inch further, it would have snuffed him entirely out. He could barely breathe as it was, otherwise, he was free and as comfortable as could be under these conditions. Jonas attempted to remove his anchor, but the old man warded him off, with an anxious supplication to find and assist his old wife. Guided by that voice of pain, Jonas soon reached the old lady and found, a bar of iron had caught her hand and crushed it near the wrist. Here was a dilemma, if indeed it were wood he could probably find an ax and soon relieve her, but what could he do with that bar of iron, he wanted a match. "Oh, for a match," was his prayer, but not being a smoker he carried no matches and for once in his life, he greatly wished he was a smoker. Finally, he discovered the complete location and fastening of that bar and believed could he obtain something for a lever, he could raise it sufficiently for the old lady to withdraw her imprisoned hand. His own wrist was paining him badly and was not a great sight better than no hand, to assist in the strenuous task present, but he endeavored to ignore the pain in his own hand, for the sake of relieving this poor old lady, who was so much worse off than he. In a few moments he had managed to obtain a leverage, that he thought sufficient to spring that bar a bit and asked the lady to pull her hand when she felt the least give in the bar, he jumped upon the lever with all the force possible, while the old lady promptly did her part and the hand was relieved. The continued pain had so weakened her, that she could not rise

and the debris was so thick and plenty that he could not get where he could raise her alone, thus, she being partially and temporarily relieved, he sought the old man again and proceeded to relieve him from his straight jacket, but first the old man must be certain this his lady was comfortable, before he would consent to anything being done for him. Gallant knight that, even in comparatively helpless old age. Jonas assured him she was as comfortable as could be brought about, until he could obtain assistance to raise her to an upright position. At this the old man became full of fire and declared, he must at once be helped out.

Jonas now endeavored to raise his obstruction, with the same method employed in the other case, but did not succeed and hunted for an ax or a saw, which never come handy when most needed, but dogged perseverance will generally produce something and he stumbled upon an ax, straight against the cutting edge, which went through the toe of his shoe and away into his foot. Soon again at the old man's side he endeavored to swing the ax and found his wrist so lame it was difficult to swing it at all, thus full execution was out of the game, and so slowly did the work progress, that the old man became peevish and said some sharp things, but he was really blameless because he could not properly grasp the conditions present, but time and bull-dog tenacity will generally win some degree of success, and thus the old man was duly chopped out, when they at once got busy in elevating the old lady to the perpendicular just as a man appeared with a lantern, when they could take account of stock a bit to discover where they were at. When the old lady noticed the blood running down the cheeks of Jonas, she at once exclaimed: "Oh, dear, you are badly hurt, too," and the lantern happening to shine on Jonas' feet, the old man noticed blood oozing from his shoe and exclaimed: "My God, man, you need attention

quite as much as we do and here, you have been hammering away to relieve us."

"Oh, no," replied Jonas, "those are but flesh wounds and will soon heal, my worst pain comes from my wrist which was badly sprained, when I first discovered myself after we first landed."

"Now, I can see," cried the old man, "why you could not wield that ax better and more effectively. I owe you a thousand and more apologies for my unkind remarks, as long as I have lived in this selfish world, I now observe I have not conquered the accursed selfishness, that was settled upon me at birth, really, I would not have believed I could become so unreasonable."

They were soon out of the debris and reached a wagon that stood near. The man with the lantern said, they were the last to be got out and had landed in the worst part of the wreck.

After reaching the town and the doctor, the old man would not receive any attention until after Jonas had been attended to, in fact, he needed little for he had but an acute sprain and a small abrasion upon his neck. After they were all comfortably situated, the old gent inquired many things concerning Jonas, his home, his circumstances, his purpose in life and the present mission that had placed him upon that ill-fated train. The following three days they spent mostly together, upon the train and at the hotel after they arrived at Kansas City. The old people seemed to take much pleasure in listening, to what Jonas had to tell them of his environments and purposes, leading him along some further than he was wont to talk of himself and affairs, however, they extracted from him the whole scheme of his ambition, in connection with the compact made with his associates and over and over again, the old man burst out laughing at the "originality," of such a plan as those school boys had entered into, remarking: "I have enjoyed the novelty of the

thing greatly and will be much pleased to learn, if it is possible in human nature, to carry such a unique and unusual proposition, through to a satisfactory accomplishment.

Jonas assured him, he believed it could and would be done by them. When alone by themselves, these old people discussed Jonas and his aspirations much of the time, the old man declaring that if that affair succeeded to the satisfaction of those boys, it would serve as an object lesson to prove, that the brotherhood of man had finally become of some purpose upon this old earth, that in place of fiction pure and simple, it had become an actuality in very truth. Now, these old people had no children and they were well to do; they both desired to compensate Jonas for what he had done for them, and after hearing his story, were greatly interested in some peculiarities that he unconsciously had betrayed; his frank and clear manner, the evident true and straightforward character that he possessed, had captured their interest and touched their hearts in his behalf.

The last evening they were to remain together, the old man opened up on Jonas from a business standpoint, remarking: "We are greatly indebted to you, Mr. Kent, for service rendered, and have decided to remunerate you abundantly for that service, but having learned what we have concerning your prospective enterprise and believing, you to be not sufficiently equipped financially, for the prompt and successful accomplishment of the proposition, we shall be much pleased if you will advise us in what way, and to what extent we may aid you," adding, "we both simply and thoroughly believe in you."

Jonas replies to this kind and considerate proposition with: "I do not consider any obligation is present between us, certainly not, unless I be the debtor. First, at the wreck, I did no more than was my bounden duty. One should not be compensated

for performing his duty, again your proposition to aid me, an entire stranger, is not in good business taste and principle, certainly, unless it can be accomplished within strict accord with cold business; true, I am a young man having at present but small capital, to offset perhaps too great an ambition, and this may cause me trouble, however, I am in it and as 'a quitter,' in my estimation never gets anywhere, thus a 'quitter' I shall never be, upon my own volition."

"Well," retorted the old man, "you shall not prevent me from executing my will, in compensation for your dogged determination to fish us out of that beastly wreck, when your own sufferings were quite the equal of ours, and I reserve the right, to determine the value of the service rendered."

As it was now some late and they not entirely over the ill effects, from loss of sleep the first night following the wreck, owing to the pain present, the old lady suggested they all retire.

"Yes, yes," cried the old man, "and we will meet again in the morning before departing."

Jonas experienced some unusual sensations as he retired that night, musing: "Here, accident has thrown opportunity across my pathway. I was placed where it would have been the duty of any man to act and none, but an idiotic brute would have refused, each person's cause in such a case becomes but a common cause, humanity would not be humanity at all, that acted for recompense under such conditions, and he who will stoop to accept proffered aid, for such service as I have rendered, can possess but little self-respect and no regard whatever for others; in fact, would actually be but a bundle of accursed selfishness, but what shall I do? I am satisfied they intend to compensate me, and I fear, should I refuse absolutely to accept their bounty, it will cause them much grief." Thus, finally, Jonas

decided to accept their generosity, should it be not too generous, realizing that a moderate sum to them, would be a colossal addition to his small pile, which was each day being reduced by his expenses.

Upon the arrival of morning, with the glorious sun stealing in upon them, the old people were early up and stirring, some fate decreeing that they should meet with Jonas to descend in the same elevator. The glad good mornings were passed and Jonas was invited to accompany them to the parlor, before entering the dining room.

After being seated the old man said: "I have labored hard and seriously during a good part of the night, in endeavor to ascertain what will satisfy me as being a suitable recompense, for the strenuous and persistent effort put forth by you, in our behalf at that horrible wreck."

Jonas here interrupted the old man with, "Kindly remember, my good friend, that I previously told you, to not allow your generosity to become too generous, should you do so, it will make me feel uncomfortably mean."

"Now, my young friend," retorted the old man, "I wish to inform you that neither would you like, to make myself and lady uncomfortable, so I trust we may be able and willing to compromise this little controversy, by leaving me scot free and open, to act the will of this lady and myself, and you free to willingly accept nothing, but that which your recent conduct rightly merited. We have threshed this thing out to a just conclusion and can be satisfied with nothing short, the service rendered to each we have estimated at the same value and I have already drawn my check to cover the full amount, taking greater pleasure in handing the same to you, than in passing out any check I have ever before drawn. Kindly accept this, Mr. Kent, not as the sum in total of our consideration for you, but as appreciation in

part of our regard for your actual worth, reserving the right, moreover, to remain in touch with you and your endeavor, by exacting from you occasional communications as to your welfare, and a promise, verbally, to advise me when at anytime I can serve you in any capacity, moreover, I am always to be kept well informed as to your whereabouts. Now my dear young friend, will you kindly subscribe to what I have suggested and acquiesce?"

Jonas had during the preceding remarks, received a check for two thousand dollars and his head had hung as if in shame, but now that it became his turn to orate, he at once threw off the humiliating and tolerant attitude, and rising from his seat with his head assuming an independent position and a broad smile upon his lips, he loudly and frankly disclaims any intention of refusing acceptance of the money, or a compliance in every respect with the desired requirements, remarking further, "Either and both parties of this controversy have a logical, legal and moral right, to make proper restrictions and requirements; thus, I for my part, must demand that you, as assumed benefactor, consider the amount of money involved as a loan and accept in return my promissory note, payable in two installments at one and two years."

The old man, whom we should call Mr. Duncan Shelby, remarks right here: "It is getting late for breakfast and we must adjourn to the dining room and visit at the table. Jonas assents to the plan but has strongly in mind the resolve, that Mr. Shelby shall not side-track his intention to treat the matter of the check as a loan.

While at the table Mr. and Mrs. Shelby are especially insistent, upon conversing regarding the future of the unique and original plan, under which the "Triple Alliance" is to live and maintain its own existence and, incidentally, becoming the crowning

success of these ambitious and persistent young men, together with their own support and that of their loving cohorts with the families they may bring forth. Both Mr. and Mrs. Shelby believe now, that they have more fully become acquainted with the proposition and the quality of timber, that the owners thereof possess in their general make-up, both morally and otherwise, and now believing it possible for "The Triple Alliance" to become a success, declaring, that "we shall watch its unfolding with unabated interest, and having nothing of our own to create any especial interest, can and shall center our attention upon this one, and with the promised information to be afforded us by you, will at all times be prepared and waiting, for a call to help on the good work."

Jonas could hold his thoughts no longer and abruptly broke in with: "Now Mr. Shelby, let me interrupt you to suggest, that we adjourn to the writing room to draw up the notes for this kindly loan, as it is nearing train time, when I must depart."

Mrs. Shelby at once retorted: "Now please do not spoil the delightful pleasure, we are at present in full enjoyment of, and, too, during the last few moments we are to remain together, by alluding to that insignificant matter, for you must know by this time, that it is wholly distasteful to us."

"Yes, yes," cried Mr. Shelby, "Mother is right, she has a right to consider that she has already suffered sufficient from results of that wreck, of which this is one and the only one that did not give pain."

"Well, well" replied Jonas, "we will pass it for the present, for in our parting I desire that not one ripple of anything unpleasurable, shall mar the last fleeting moments of our present intercourse. We have known each other but a few hours, but I feel that in those hours, a deep and lasting friendship has obtained, a permanent abiding place within our

sacred precincts. Train time was at hand and Jonas must depart, certain it was that never had there been a parting between a son and parents, that could be more affecting and regretful than was this; tears rolled down the cheeks of the old people and the old lady simply could not articulate, while Mr. Shelby could do little more than whimper.

One morning the hotel clerk handed Jonas a letter, which proved to be from his friend living in Joplin, who had promised to advise him, should he learn of anything available to him in his search. This letter informed him that his friend had received from an acquaintance, the intelligence that "through ill health, he feels obliged to dispose of his ranch located in Texas." This friend wrote, that it was a very large property and a good one.

Jonas had not been especially taken with anything he had thus far seen, thus promptly wrote his friend, "I will arrive in Joplin in a few days and will be much pleased to have you as traveling mate, to inspect the Texas ranch referred to in your letter, believing it to be something like what I am searching for."

Upon arriving in Joplin a few days later, Jonas at once sought out his friend and together, they set out for the "Lone Star State."

The owner of the property in question was, as he expressed it, "right smart glad" to receive them and bespoke at once for opportunity, to entertain them for a considerable period. Jonas was much pleased with the country and this property was located, but a comparatively short distance from Fort worth, while Jonas had already considered it practical to reside in that city, at least part of the time, should Mrs. Kent prefer it to actual ranch life. It was located on the Brazos river and this particular ranch had six miles of water front, a very unusual happening, while it forbade two ranches in the rear, any

water front at all. Jonas had discovered this feature before it had been brought to his attention, but considered it good business policy to appear ignorant, of the advantageous conditions presenting themselves, unless disclosed by the present proprietor, for was not he the one to exhibit his wares and point out their virtues, while he, Jonas, considered he was there to discover the defects?

The herds of stock upon this magnificent property, were meager indeed, the present owner had really appropriated, but a small portion of the ten thousand acres, as the aged owner had said, "with my state of health it is but a crime, to hold down so much of nature's bounty to man."

Jonas had practically considered all this beyond him, fully realizing that the property was worth many times his modest pile, but he was there to acquire something, if possible, perhaps the owner would consider a division of it. One morning after breakfast they sat upon the veranda, when Jonas, to make the thing appear either a possibility or an impossibility, frankly put the question: "My good friend, what may be your price for this property? I am thinking it may be quite beyond my grasp, my pile as you can imagine, is a young pile and I was not born of wealthy parents.

The owner replied: "The property is probably worth to any man who will use it entire, five dollars per acre, however, under the conditions present, I will sell it to you at three, provided you also take the stock at market rate."

"That will be beyond me," retorted Jonas, "that means thirty thousand for the land, how much value have you in the stock?"

"Around two thousand, I reckon," replied the owner.

"Would you divide the land if one could see his way to make it?"

"It should not be divided," was the reply, "perhaps you have overlooked one condition, as a good reason why it should be kept intact, you see it holds the key to the lock that locks out six miles of water front, from use by the ranches in the rear, only as they pass their stock across this one, which by fencing they cannot do."

"Have they any right to pass over it when not fenced?" inquired Jonas.

"Well, custom grants the right because nobody prevents, but only a fence across the back side from the river is necessary," was the reply. "I have never made any use of the part they cross on, thus have had no occasion to object, but their herds are increasing so fast now, that the time is near when it will prove a damage. Now see here, my young friend, I will try to meet you half way, at least, there is a mortgage on the property of ten thousand dollars which can remain as long as needed, if you can arrange to take the stock and tools at two thousand dollars' cash and can make, a cash payment of the same amount on the land, I will enter into a contract for the payment of the balance in installments, first, of two thousand a year for the first four years, and five thousand a year for the following two years, allowing you six years to make the full amount, with interest at six per cent, payable annually. I have no boys coming up and so must sell, but shall not need all the money at present. I think you are a character that will make good on this."

Jonas's friend, here spoke up, declaring: "It is a chance, Mr. Kent, that you should not allow to pass you by; if you cannot fully make the financial end, I have a little that you are welcome to."

Here Jonas came back at the owner with: "In what way can I secure you for these payments."

"The reply was: "I will give you 'a bond for a deed' until you have made the first four payments, and then, make a warranty deed and take a second mortgage."

"That is fair, very fair," Jonas replied, "and under those conditions, I will decide to undertake the stupendous undertaking. I have present with me all that I can spare, twenty-five hundred and if my friend here, will temporarily loan me five hundred, we can draw the papers and close the deal today." Thus, when Jonas slept that night, he was upon his own domain and under his own roof, and Jonas Kent had found "his baby," but he quickly with a sigh realized, that he had bitten off a big bite, one that would require all that Mr. Shelby had believed was present in his personality, to make good with this elephant upon his young back, audibly musing, "What will my conservative old parents, and even my associates, think of so reckless a proceeding, and really, myself as well? Am I a bit luny, or has my head taken a notion to join the swelled variety, and thus, am I some other than 'Jonas Kent, from old Massachusetts?' Indeed, I no longer belong to old New England, I have in very truth now emigrated, 'a Yankee' no longer is Jonas Kent. Well, I am certainly in for it, no mistake about that."

Jonas and his friend remained about the place a couple of weeks, to enable Jonas to become familiarized, with the modus operandi of running a ranch, arranging with the former owner to remain on the place until the following March, as he must go back east to pull himself together and perhaps, prepare to formally emigrate to the land of cowboys, to nurse and rear "his chosen baby," but what will "Sybil Carter" think of a home so far distant, will she desert the ship absolutely, rather than consider a home of her own in this far distant state, who, pray, can definitely tell, and it greatly worried Jonas. This phase of the case had not appeared to him before, as it did now, that he was bound completely and committed entirely, and should she object, however could he help himself? Plainly he could not, thus while Jonas had enjoyed many sweet hours since that railroad accident, here come the bit-

ter ones to counteract and overcome. The first regretful moments that he had experienced since entering the compact with his chums, now pressed down upon him as he tossed upon his bed in perplexity, but these unpleasant hours of reproach, did not long remain with him, he recalled the fact that Wesley, at least, would naturally have to seek "his baby" in some remote part of the country, for mining operations were not any part of crowded cities, thus some comfort was secured in the fact, "that misery loves company," while Wesley and Janice, would undoubtedly become that company.

Jonas well realized that he had to secure more capital in some way, to operate the ranch as he must to meet his payments quickly and largely increase his herd. He figured that the first payment could be cared for with the note, his father had promised to endorse for him of two thousand, when he had secured a footing that warranted its investment. Surely, he had done that, as several had told him the landed property he had purchased, was easily worth forty thousand. Naturally, now, his thoughts reverted to his old friend, Mr. Shelby, in connection with the raising of sufficient capital to work the ranch and increase the herd, and as this was free and clear, he could secure Mr. Shelby for two or three thousand dollars and perhaps, Mr. Shelby would try to accommodate him, as he had seemed so insistent upon being advised of his whereabouts and welfare. With these thoughts came some grain of comfort and, as generally with youth, it is "hope on and hope ever," but while recognizing a "hope deferred" possibility, never admit the possibility of a "forlorn hope," so with Jonas Kent, who had enlisted for the war, with the implacable intent of winning, with sheathing never a weapon before reaching the goal.

Jonas and his Joplin friend, whose name has not been mentioned, although Jonas now considers he merits one, is found to be Bert Smally, are rapidly ar-

ranging to depart, leaving the ranch, as they believed, in good hands, until Jonas could return from his trip east. It was well into December and Jonas had promised to return by March, leaving instructions with his manager to watch out for opportunities, to acquire young stock of the female persuasion, particularly promising to forward the necessary money, to settle for all that could be purchased.

A morning came with the train for Bert's home in Joplin, where Jonas intended to stop a few days with his friend. Soon after arriving in Joplin, Bert introduced him to his friend there, for whom he had taken the trip to St. Louis, when he and Jonas had by accident met and became acquainted. This friend of Bert's, was a young man about the age of Jonas, had been raised there in Joplin as a comparatively poor boy and recently had inherited a snug sum, from an uncle who had resided and done business in St. Louis. As soon as the estate was settled up, he intended to make that city his home and enter, the same kind of business his uncle had engaged in. He had not, however, inherited all of his uncle's property and thus, it might require a year or more to possess himself of his portion. Bert introduced him to Jonas as "Mr. Ellis Slayton, an unfortunate of single blessedness," adding, "and this is Mr. Jonas Kent, a victim of the same misfortune." "Avaunt there," cried Ellis, "who can tell we both don't beat you yet at your own game, too, for what have you to show against the crime of race suicide, after five years in the shackles of matrimony? Ha, ha, old boy, don't you wish you had not come 'against the pricks, with your dirty kicks?' And Mr. Kent can hit you off as well, for I see it in his fighting eye."

"Ah," retorted Bert, "I considered it not possible, that you fire up in that lamentable style."

"But," replies Ellis, "it is tit for tat, you know, in real war, and why not the same tactics in a masquerade?"

The three boys were much together while Jonas remained, and by reason of much urging his stay was prolonged to nearly three weeks, and then had become so chummy with Ellis, that Ellis was invited to accompany him east and so look over the far end of Uncle Sam's dooryard, before entering life's work in settling down to business, Jonas exclaiming, "It will do you much good, Ellis, and better fit you to assume full business responsibility."

"Yes, yes," Bert butted in, "nothing in the world can do you so much good, go on, go on young man, never refuse a thing so good as that." A few days later, Ellis decides to accompany Jonas east. Who then shall say, that this trip shall not prove for Ellis Slayton, the one of greatest importance throughout his complete career? Many new acquaintances are to be met with, including a lively and attractive pair of girl twins, which Ellis, we think, will be the proper boy to appreciate.

Jonas had become very fond of his new acquaintance, he liked him much in every way, being greatly pleased at the happy prospect of such excellent company, upon his long trip home, with the pleasing thought that opportunity is here afforded him, to render Ellis a pleasing and valuable service, in interesting and entertaining a meritorious friend of Bert Smalley's, who may, when arriving, appreciate the lively companionship that his chums and the girls can afford him, but who can tell, whatever of affection Ellis may be leaving behind.

In conversation one day, Jonas mentioned to Ellis, "the Alliance" formed by himself and associates, when Ellis becoming greatly interested, emphatically declared the project to be, the most novel and fascinating affair, he had ever known in any business transaction, wondering if such a scheme could possibly be carried out, to a complete and satisfactory finish, remark-

ing, "that a trio of men who can do that thing will certainly be remarkable."

Incidentally, Jonas spoke the name of Wesley Hart as one of them. At once upon hearing this name, Ellis interrupted with, "Here, wait a minute, Wesley Hart, now, awhile ago I accidentally met a person in the hotel with that name and we conversed an hour or so, he was greatly interested in the subject of mining and, say, he is a mighty bright fellow, is he one of your Alliance?"

"Yes," replied Jonas, "he is the mining end of it."

"Well," continued Ellis, "if the other one is of the same type of the two I have met, I will wager that 'The Triple Alliance' is a winner that the world will be proud of, while the parents and sweethearts of that novel and enterprising trio, are rightly in line for the heartiest of congratulations. God bless the whole bunch, Amen."

The boys are off upon a day and Jonas has in mind a circuitous inspection trip of it, that Ellis shall obtain a fair view of conditions, through different parts of the country and New York city especially.

Wondering what Basil Carter has been up to all this time, the reader is asked to leave these happy chums for a season, to wend their way east, for Jonas to again meet home and friends, and Ellis to acquire much information, that will make for his profit and pleasure, while Basil can be relied upon to supply pleasing material in plenty and sufficiently interesting, to warrant another full chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE COVETED FRANCHISE

Basil is a factor in the human family at this time that properly should be termed "en route." When last referred to by the writer, in his persistent search for "his baby," he had done the middle west and was working easterly, having jotted down several localities that gave some signs of meriting consideration, having interviewed many persons regarding railroad facilities in their immediate neighborhood. Some admitted that there might be projected a line here and there, but when questioned as to the amount of traffic that might be depended upon, were greatly obscure in their estimation, thus Basil found but little comfort in the prospect before reaching Pittsburg. Here was a lay-out that looked better than anything before met with, but there seemed a tendency on the part of a certain crowd, or lobby like, to block any attempt to locate a trolley road, over the route that Basil had in mind and one man remarked, "he didn't believe God Almighty would be allowed to put a road through there, unless willing to give that cussed crowd half of the stock as a silencer."

Having such a shameful condition as that to meet, Basil wisely concluded that such a prospect he could not reckon with, under the plan he had devised it could avail him nothing, so decided to leave them to their own rot and proceeded eastward, where he discovered two or three small opportunities, but they looked not so good as some he had looked over farther west. Finally, upon reaching a large city on the seaboard and having been about here and there for several days, with nothing especially inviting from his standpoint, until one evening as he sat in the lobby of a hotel musing over the prospect, or perhaps it might well be

termed anti-prospect, which had seemed to take him back over a portion of his route, in comparing the several propositions he had considered possible, and when about considering a silent proposition to retire for a good night's sleep, preparatory to resuming his journey backward, two men entered the lobby and seating themselves quite near him, opened up a conversation that at once caught his ear, and as they proceeded, they secured it tighter and tighter. While, generally speaking, Basil greatly abhorred an eavesdropper, yet here was a case where it had all come to him, he had not moved and why should he, these people had not appeared to care for privacy, a hotel lobby is public property and one has to hear whatever sound is present about him, with his hearers in good order, and Basil's are especially so at this time, while the subject of conversation would naturally place them on the alert, for the men were talking about a certain location for a "mighty profitable trolley proposition," as they expressed it.

Basil listened intently for over an hour, felt not sleepy any more or any inclination to retire. Finally, one of the men departed and as the other continued seated, seemingly musing away to his own satisfaction, Basil soon made a move as if to retire, but standing beside his chair a moment, finally made bold to remark, "My friend, beg pardon, I am from up New England way, but sitting so near, I overheard you and your friend remark concerning opportunity to locate a trolley road. Being interested in prospective construction work in that line, I have taken the liberty of addressing you regarding it, without wishing to intrude, however."

"No embarrassing intrusion, sir, in the least, no privacy in the matter," replied the other, "it simply is a case of the smallest kind of cussedness imaginable. I don't mind giving you the particulars, it makes quite a story altogether. There is an old fellow way off out

in the country by the name of Darius Green, he is a farmer by occupation, but he is a politician as well, and his influence in politics is beyond the conception of the average political adherent. I mention these points to convey to you, some idea of what the people are up against, who want a trolley road built up through 'Urban Valley.' There are in going seventeen miles, thirteen lively villages, manufacturing villages, too, with no railroad whatever passing through them, and the manufacturers have been all these years hauling their freight, twelve miles over the mountain to reach a railroad for shipment.

"This old farmer obtained a franchise seven years ago for an 'Electric Road' through that valley and through his political pull, has managed to amend, renew and hold his franchise against all comers and without building the road. 'The Subway Rapid Transit Company' have repeatedly tried to arrange with the old man for the building of this road, also 'The Little River Valley Company', running from 'Wholesale city to Jinksville' (that's at the north end of this franchise grant), have endeavored to get a chance to build and equip a road upon the old farmer's franchise. Not being able to do anything with him, both companies have endeavored to procure a franchise by having his totally annulled, but the old cuss meets them at every corner, and now they say 'it can't be done.' They have tried to beat him out and have tried to offer him the money to go on and build it, but as near as I can make out he considers that they, the two companies, have combined to beat him out of his franchise, which puts his back up higher than 'Gilroy's Kite,' and apparently now, nobody can do anything with him, this is the phase of the case, my friend and I were considering. The old man has had his own way in politics so long, like many another of his kind, he has now become crusted over, practically conscienceless and perhaps soulless absolutely. The president of

the Transit Company seems to regard him that way, however, has been fighting him several years and probably is hoping now, that he will forget to wake up some fine morning, they would give him a good price for his franchise and enough to make him independent."

Basil here remarked in a casual sort of way, "Then you and your friend are considering the trying out of your tact and luck, I suppose, with the old man."

"Well," replied the stranger, "we were considering whether or no we would stand any chance to overhaul him, sort of taking stock of our available assets in the premises. Probably the fact that we hail from this city, would at once arouse his suspicions, as it has done before when others have approached him; he suspicioned that they were in the employ of the 'Transit Company' and would come back at them fiercely with, 'How do I know that you have not been sent out here by 'them devils in the city,' to rob me of that franchise.' "

"Ha, ha, ha," roared Basil, "he is venomous sure enough and probably, worthy of any man's steel in any good fight, how far out does he live?"

"Well, quite a ways out," was the reply; "after leaving the train at Danby, have to ride about fifteen miles with a team, so it is an all-day jaunt and we don't quite believe it is worth while, others have so utterly failed and likely, may not do anything about it."

"Well," remarked Basil, "should you attempt to beard the lion in his den and succeed in so doing, I wish you good luck, it seems a great pity that one man can find it possible, to so block progress and inconvenience so many people; he who can wrest that from him, it would seem should merit from the public, everlasting gratitude and a suitable memorial after he has passed on."

"You are right my friend," is the reply, "but where is the man that can do it?"

Basil laughed outright and said goodnight, soon retiring to his bed but not to sleep for a while. He over and over again rehearsed, all that had been told him by that communicative stranger, who probably would not have been thus communicative, had he not considered the matter practically a forelorn hope, moreover, he was talking with a man from far off New England, who probably is much more interested in construction work than in franchise.

Undoubtedly Basil had thrown him off his guard, if his interest in the affair was sufficient to need a guard, but the fact was, he was only on the fence, his faith was indeed weak, moreover, he scarcely had the courage of his convictions, and Basil reasoned: "Here is a combination of conditions that fate has placed in my pathway, I believe, to tempt me to try out my own metal, with what is regarded as an incorrigible, malicious and determined type of character." The more Basil thought it over, the more willing and anxious he became to enter the affray; true, his experience in this line was practically nil, but he considered it might prove beneficial to him even though he succeeded not in capturing, first the old farmer, and then his much coveted franchise, thus before he slept, he had resolved to see what that man looked like, if nothing further could be accomplished.

Upon rising early next morning, Basil at first sought information from the hotel clerk, as to what road Danby was located on, and then obtained a time table which informed him that a train left in forty minutes, then hastening to his room completed his breakfast and repairing to the railroad station, very soon was on his way to Danby station. Arriving there, he soon had obtained the use of a team to drive over the mountain, with instructions from the owner of the team as to the whereabouts of "the Green Farm" and full directions of how to most quickly reach it. Basil's thoughts were more than busy, in continually

reverting to the incidents alluded to, in the stranger's description of what had happened, concerning the old man and "his trolley road franchise," while endeavoring to determine what attitude was best to assume when approaching the old man. He fully believed he had a peculiar character to deal with and asked himself, "Why not assume a peculiar method in attempting to acquire his good graces?"

Basil made good time in negotiating the road over the mountain, or to be more exact, he had not to proceed wholly over a mountain, for "the Green Farm" was located just over the divide, from which point a delightful and extensive view of the valley beyond was available. Up and down that valley for miles could be seen chimneys, towering above the busy medium-sized factories, where hundreds of people were engaged in earning a livelihood, and this, Basil well believed, was the much desired route of a once projected trolley line, now held up through the apparent cussedness of a narrow-souled human being; here, then, is the mecca so greatly coveted. "But," Basil mused, "that certainly is quite as fine a valley as I have ever gazed upon and, they say it continues for seventeen miles, nature here has shown its capacity and willingness, to afford man every comfort and convenience necessary to his complete welfare, and this recalls to mind some lines applicable to the text and spirit of the occasion.

"As I gaze down yonder at that beautiful vale,
My heart leaps, in gratitude to the God of all,
But falters at the thought, that only man is stale,
All else seems true to instinct, only man must fall."

From this view Basil could see, a little distant, what he well knew was the "Green farmhouse." But a few moments' drive and he was there, a large roomy colonial style structure and not having been troubled with the smear of paint of late, or modern improve-

ments of any type. In fact, many little repairs might be attempted, with little danger of injuring the feelings of the old and sacred structure and certainly not, disconcert the vision of the stranger who chanced to come that way, really, it had not the appearance of being the home of a thoroughly thrifty and broad-minded person, and yet, it marked not the usual signs of poverty, it showed more of the air of neglect than of "the grinds of necessity," those broad acres were prima-facie evidence against the stress of poverty. Here was ample sustenance for all that could abide within the walls, of that "grand old farm mansion," were but a negative amount of thrift and enterprise employed here in management. Basil audibly mused, "Those who people that house should be cleverly clothed and fare sumptuously each day of their lives, then what of a family who has for its head, a man having sufficient mental capacity to become a leader of men, to dominate in public matters of as vast importance as 'a public railroad'? What shall be said of a man whose intellect shall have become so dwarfed in size and besotted in selfishness and malice, as to prescribe for his neighbors and the public generally, that inconvenience, discomfort and expense that the absence of any modern means of rapid transit necessarily entails, what punishment should be meted out to one who holds the key to such a situation and refuses because of a petty grudge or spite, absolutely refuses, to turn the key and let the procession move on, to its own pleasure and glory and to the glory of Almighty God, whose premises are being encumbered by such as he?"

After musing thus, Basil drove into the dooryard of the "Green farmhouse." Soon an old man around sixty-five appeared in one of the doorways of the barn and as Basil drove that way, loudly exclaimed, "My gaddy, young man, do you know you are a long way

from home and how are ye, anyway, and does your mother know you are out?"

"You can bet some," retorted Basil, "and grandpa, I have first to tell you, that I fully realize I am away from home, or I should not see your cheery old visage before me, and to your second insult, I can truly inform you, sir, that I, Basil Carter, am all here upon three good meals a day and ready for any good fighting emergency, that you or any other belligerent may fancy to put over; your third and last trespass upon decency, may be not quite so easily answered, for when we last met she put me to bed, nicely tucked me in, heard me say my prayers, and mayhap supposes I am there yet. Probably I might have been, had I not conceived a strong desire to look out right smart somewhere in God's country, for a grandpa who might be as homely and agreeable as you, thinking I should enjoy the setting of my peekers upon him for a while, to stamp thoroughly upon my memory a vision of just what he looks like anyway and learn of his environments as best I might. Now, my dear grandpa, have I satisfactorily answered your insulting questions?"

"Ha, ha, ha," roared the old man, "give me your best hand, 'you wizard of the evil one,' where in the name of all the imps of hades did they shake you out, feed and clothe you durin' your infantile moments, what brand of milk did they use in producin' such a personality as you are a luggin' around, and did they succeed in producin' another such, ha, ha, ha!"

"Now see here, grandpa," retorted Basil, "you have smashed all records to a frazzle altogether, in propounding silly and insulting questions, first, I don't suppose I ever was shaken out, but like the Topsy of old, ' 'specs I just growed'; second, don't seem to remember much about clothes, the feed I sometimes fell on to and the milk you are inquiring about, am pretty certain did not come from any cows of yours, for they said I was rather particular about quality in my feed

trough and to come again once more, to clean up your last question, I believe they said in summing up, that no more freaks could be produced, because they fell short of the proper kind of timber."

"Ha, ha, ha, stop, stop," the old man roared, "beat, beat, beaten to the tattered end of a frazzle, never before have I been so ignominiously whipped at any game of my own challenge, and now, my apostle of 'sarcastic sarcasm and outrageous humor,' what evil errand has brought you hither and what service of mine, can be on your saucy and active mind, some special purpose I'll warrant, and nothin' slow either I warrant some more, do you want to hire out as a milker or as a stable cleaner, or do you want to buy the farm and then put me on your pay roll, as a go-as-you-please-whenever-you dare?"

"Rah, rah, rah," roared Basil, "I have already told you why I came, in amusement you have already rendered great service and to hire out in the capacity you have kindly suggested, would be but a mockery of my dear grandpa, for as a milker I should soon bankrupt the farm, as a stable cleaner am an inevitable failure, never having been thoroughly good at 'self cleaning up' yet, so must tell you I just come out for a ride and to see, what has been represented to me as 'God's country', all summed up, it may be a case of physical necessity coupled with curious desires, the latter I am bound to admit have already been largely satisfied, the former I think will be, when I have fully explored the country hereabouts. By the way, grandpa, that valley down there I should believe, at this distance, would come very near to being 'God's best acre', really, that is a choice view to gaze upon."

"Yes, yes," cried the old man, "your ideas and mine are less than a mile apart on that, and say, put your horse in my barn, I'll hitch up 'the pair' and just show you what that valley stands for on this great earth, it's the 'Paradise of America,' young

man, and if you hain't swarmed and located your hive already, you might sit up and take notice of what you may notice as you pass along."

Basil and his newly found friend had in very truth become sincerely friendly, as they rode along and conversed upon many subjects including personalities, while each became much attached to the other. The old man had already taken a special liking to Basil, having found him a foe worthy even of his saucy steel, and the frankness displayed during their homely sallies, had captivated the old man's appreciation. Observing this, Basil believed he had the first line of battle practically won, but he realized that he could easily commit a mistake, in broaching the subject nearest his heart. Here was a man that could easily be made to go off at half cock, one who had been nursing for years uncomfortable feelings, engendered by suspicion and jealousy, a fighter in all the baseness of crooked politics, which had warped and petrified his very soul, here he was now, much at the mercy of this young man who so unconsciously had captured, first, his interested attention, and then, successfully so worked upon his being in brotherly spirit, that he was now susceptible to being easily led by his newfound associate.

They, these two characters, apart so far and yet allied so near, happily rode and rode many miles through the beautiful valley, and who should tell at that day and date that this was not to become the home of "Basil's baby." Basil's heart was now set upon the acquirement of that old man's franchise, for would not this situation afford just the best possible opportunity, for him to establish his footing, here with all these factories and the necessary population herewith, would not this be the jolliest location for a trolley road? No wonder others had sought for that franchise, and no wonder they had

harshly stigmatized the old man for withholding it, and thus, prevent these people from enjoying the conveniences a railroad would afford them, through the selfish and jealous malice of one person, was not this worse than a misdemeanor under the law of the land? Yet Basil thought he could see as the real cause of the dilemma, nothing but the absence of tact, while the tactics the others had employed were probably such, as would not have worked had they been attempted upon themselves.

Around one o'clock, at Basil's suggestion, they drew up at a hotel and with Basil as the host of the occasion, they and the team were served with the fat of the land and then turned, to retrace the distance they had covered. When nearing the "Old farm-house" the old man suddenly broke out,

"Say, you are not in any special hurry are you? It is rather late now to make the trip back to the railroad, in season to catch the last train, why not stop with us overnight and then take your time to get back to the big city?"

"Why," replied Basil, "I don't know as I ought, it seems a bit like imposing upon the good nature and kindly treatment of an esteemed friend and it may be, attempting to ride a free horse unduly."

"Don't look at it that way, my young friend," cried the old man, "the obligation is on the other side, it would greatly please me to have your bright company meanwhile, we don't get much of your sort out this way and I judge, it is not plenty any other way, because I am around a bit one time and another and I have never before met just your pattern, besides, I want to talk to you about a matter in which I am greatly interested and perhaps the principal mourner. I want considerable time to describe the whole situation, if you will stop with us, we'll 'kill the fatted calf' and you shall have the first choice of the liver."

"Well," replied Basil, "I really don't know what

the owner of that team will think, may get the sheriff after me for stealing that team."

"Well, well," said the old man, "let 'em come, I'll go your bail and if necessary pay your fine."

"But," retorted Basil, "how about the prison term?"

"Oh," cried the old man, "I'll serve that out, too, you can go home to mother all right and again tackle them prayers."

Basil finally consented to remain over night, he believed matters were assuredly working his way, fate had seemed to have taken charge of his affairs and decreed happenings, even better than he believed he could himself have done, surely this stopping over night with 'the lion right in his den', was just what he had desired most to do, and the old man had himself proposed it, moreover, he had something on his mind he desired to impart to Basil and Basil believed he could guess, if he tried hard, about what it was that seemed to disturb the old man, and decided to lay low and listen; for the world he would not even suggest a trolley, but take a negative tack and let the old man become the beggar, for now he believed the old man would hang himself, if sufficient rope were allowed him.

After disposing of the team, they repaired to the house and the old man called out to mother in an adjoining room, to come hither and inspect the prodigy he had that day stumbled upon, "and say, mother, I believe it will prove out the best piece of horse-luck, that has come my way in many a day, Mr. Carter, mother, 'Basil Carter from old New England,' and one of the sarsiest specimens of human flesh, that ever was got up at the time of the creation."

"Well," interrupted mother, "you have set him out in your usual style and methinks he should tell you it is unsafe, for 'the pot to call the kettle black.'

You are old enough, Darius Green, to know how to be more decent to strangers."

"Strangers?" cried the old man, "we are not strangers by a jugful, been a visitin' all day and soused one of the best dinners into us, that ever was served in the whole of 'Urban Valley.' I tell you, mother, when you want to acquire first-class and down-right solid friendship, the most agreeable and sensible way to do it, is, to set before the mouth that 'which will tickle the belly,' but in this case it was not I, 'Darius Green', that did the settin' of it up Mr. Carter here was responsible for the 'tickle matter' and Darius Green was in a very receptive mood and now, mother, the table has turned about and you are to furnish 'the tickle,' while we will endeavor to assume a receptive attitude, in a samplin' of your spread."

"Yes," replied mother, "that's always your position when there is any eating to be done, never knew you to be on the other side, but you can't be very hungry, after the spread you say you bowed to a few hours ago."

"But, mother," replied Darius, "I don't 'stay tickled' worth a cent, that awful gnawin' does love to come back, and if it stays too long, it gets on my nerves and you well know, that it is unpleasant for everybody when my nerves get real nervy."

While supper was being prepared, the chums repaired to the veranda, the old man opening up in questions more particularly relative, to Basil's home environments and New England in general, said he had read some accounts concerning the habits of the people and occasionally met a man from up that way, but had obtained no definite idea of the goings on there and could be much interested in what Basil could tell him, thus, before supper was served this was the subject matter.

After supper they again assembled upon the ve-

randa, this time, however, mother was present and asked a few questions concerning his parents and and whether, he intended to locate there permanently, to which Basil replied, "Probably not, I am now out upon an inspection trip, to learn if another part of the country suits me better and to discover where that part lies, in short, really, I am out looking for opportunity."

Abruptly the old man breaks in with, "Say Mr. Carter, we have spent a jolly good time together since you came along this morning, you have inspired sufficient confidence with me to make it appear plain, that you are a safe person to entrust with important secret matters. I desire to take someone into confidence for the purpose of counsel, you asked today, 'Is there no railroad nearer this valley than the one I came up on'; at my negative reply you seemed greatly surprised, which was natural and proper for any stranger, but I noticed you made no remark concernin' the situation, thus, I am forced to believe, that you are just what your guileless attitude represents you to be, as not being out in this vicinity in the interests of anybody or any clique, who would, if they could, rob any poor man who might possess somethin' that they coveted. I have all day studied you close, for the simple reason, that several have been here acting a lie, and really, were nothing but lies. Your frankness appeared to good advantage right at the start; at first, I wondered if that was but another phase of the same breed that had come before, you have stood all the tests that I have been able to use with you and now, mother, I feel pretty certain that we can counsel with this young man in safety."

"Now, Mr. Carter, I want to tell you the case from the beginnin', and will admit at the start, that occasionally I dabble a bit in politics, in fact, I rather enjoy the game, especially when I can, without much

trouble, bag a few aces and then a benefit or two for Darius Green. Well, I think all that has happened in the situation, that I am about to tell you of. I have got a few pretty staunch friends down in that valley and when somethin' comes my way that is quite fetchin', I never forgit 'em, they know I won't turn that trick and are like any good dog, that appears on hand whenever they are whistled for. Well, about seven years ago, I conceived a strong notion that it wouldn't hurt any of us people livin' around that valley, very much, if a railroad of some sort really should point its independent nose up through to the t'other end, I figgered that it might be worth while for Darius Green, to stir up the state assembly for a franchise, after I had slept with the thing a few nights more or less, a thing mother strongly objected to at first, but really, I don't suppose she up and did it through any real jealousy, but they will sometimes, you know, feel a little put out about things—"

"Well, well," exclaimed mother, "go on with your story and leave out your nonsense."

"Yes, yes," retorted Darius, "but you know people have to mix in a few side lines, to make the play attractive in any first-class show.

"Well, as I was a saying before, mother got nervy, I threshed the thing out and when complete, I just whistled to Tom, Dick and Harry, my friends you know, well, they belong to that state assembly and had come to be of some count there, was I a member? Oh, no, I can help Darius Green better bein' on the outside, a good fire needs watchin', it sometimes desires to cool off and anything engaged in burnin' itself up, can't watch its own failin's, that state assembly occasionally gets so all-fired hot, that it can't direct itself intelligently and that is where Darius Green becomes something of a necessity, especially, if they might be engaged about somethin'

that Darius Green is personally interested in. Well, we got that franchise through that assembly mill and everybody hereabouts, was glad that 'Darius' had been born so many years ago. After a while some city chaps imagined 'Darius Green' had procured somethin', that by all good rights they orter possess and decided to spend a car fare or two, to go out and scoop it all in, and I understand they say they endeavored to buy 'Darius' out, but Darius says to the contrary notwithstanding, that they tried to 'squeeze him out'. There is no possible question that they tried it a mighty durned hard and in all the different ways, their genius for cussedness could suggest, and because he didn't squeeze, they have by all honorable and dishonorable means, endeavored to say and do smart things about him, presumin' I suppose, that it might injure his feelin's somewhat, but their great misfortune has been, that they were not sufficiently acquainted with Darius Green, to successfully chew up what they attempted to bite off. Then a similarly smart crowd from a big city, on the t'other end of the franchise territory, attempted to put over the same old grind, with several variations, that even a self-respecting idiot could not respect, unless he was especially fond of a low-lived human hog, but even with these apparently temptin' variations, the results were always similar, the same. All this time, however, Darius, in imitation of two or three of his 'skim milk cows', with a mischievous squint at mother, lay around complacently a chewin' of his cud, waitin' for 'em ter git up courage enough for another tack, on some sort of a respectable line, if there was anybody capable of doing the trick, but I had many a doubt, that a really honest railroad builder would ever come my way."

"But," Basil interrupted, "how in the dickens could you hold that franchise so long and not attempt to build the road, two years is the limit, is it not?"

"See here, young man, didn't I tell you a spell ago, that 'Darius Green' sometimes dabbled a bit in politics, and don't you know that politics knows no limit, that the right kind of politics to have is 'self politic politics' and that truly defined is, 'a go as you please and when you please, and come back when you git ready'. Well, that is 'Darius Green's' favorite kind, he feels safer when embracin' that kind, than any other kind he has ever tried, so why not, young man, stick by that which has served you well? In the case of this franchise, 'Darius' emphatically believes, that so far as them city chaps is concerned, it will prove out a satisfyin' thing 'to let well enough alone'."

"But," retorted Basil, "you did not explain to me how you kept the franchise alive."

"Oh," replied the old man, "that was dead easy, as often as necessary, and generally a good sight oftener, that state assembly has another meetin', and Tom, Dick and Harry are notified, that 'Darius Green' wants a codicil put on to his franchise, there is one sentence that doesn't read right and he wants it fixed up."

"Yes, Mr. Green, I see that part of it," cried Basil, "but don't Tom, Dick and Harry ever meet with opposition in their proposals?"

"Yes, yes," retorted the old man, "but what is this great state a payin' them for, unless to do its biddin', 'Darius Green' is a part owner in this state and he voted for them fellers and told his friends to vote for 'em and just as he hires a cow milker to work for him, so he expects the fellers he sends to that meetin' will accomplish what he sets out to git accomplished, if they meet opposition it is up to them to knock it out, by gaddy, and they don't know any better than to do the trick, and up to this very day, 'Darius Green' has got every codicil attached that he has attempted to git, moreover, that franchise can become more aged yet if necessary, by gaddy, while 'Darius Green' will be cer-

tain it don't git outlawed. The real fact is, my young friend, we, mother and I, are out a huntin' every day of our lives, for a 'real man,' a man with some conscience, some ability, some desire to be of some real benefit to the world and especially to all of Urban Valley, a man whom we can believe in from sun-up to sun-down, that we can trust all the way through, and young man, I have to tell you, it's hard scratchin' to find him, we have scratched many a day, by gaddy, and muck-raked this section of Uncle Sam's farm many times over, and say, that man just don't live hereabouts, now I am comin' to the p'nt, Mr. Carter. You have lit down upon us as though you might have employed an airy-plain, to fetch yer all the way from old New England, at the first pop upon meetin' me, you plainly showed your metal and you have several times since exhibited some good sense, while I have been a coddin' you, mother has been usin' her excellent powers of piercin' scrutiny and although no word has passed between us, the signs of silence has placed you entirely in her confidence and you got badly into mine scme hours ago, therefore, we are wonderin' in our simple minds, whether or not you would consider the renderin' of us some assistance, in an endeavor to git this franchise into workin' shape. We are gittin' along in years and have no children to lean on in our old age, we would like to see that franchise turned into 'an operatin' fact' down there, while we are here, and perhaps enjoy a few rides on it, moreover, somethin' in a way of income, what we have so long hoped might be the means of helping out a bit in our old age, when the old cows have ceased to shed forth a pittance in 'poor quality milk'."

"Ha, ha, ha," roared Basil, "you don't even forget trifles I see, grandpa."

"Ah, no," retorted the old man, "but you know when we started in, it was tit for tat, young man versus old man, and it came out a draw, so now I appre-

hend we can maintain a draw throughout business dealin's, bein' both worthy of each other's steel. Now, Mr. Carter—"

"One moment please, Mr. Green," abruptly broke in Basil, "kindly, if you will, call me by my first name, it seems too formal for you at your age to address me that way, may I be Basil, just Basil, to you and Mrs. Green? It seems to me we can feel more friendly with less convention."

"Yes," remarked mother, "I fully agree with you, personally, I dislike associating at a distance with those I am fond of."

"I rather like this arrangement, too," the old man cried, "when I am comin' up agin somethin' that's worth a comin' up agin, which ain't often, by gaddy. Now what do you say, Basil, to a takin' hold with us in some way under some plan, just figger one out yourself, I won't interfere except to restrict one restriction, or perhaps it will involve two parties, and them two are them city smarties, that I have already told you have tried to squeeze Darius Green all out of his laboriously acquired franchise, for Darius possibly can't forgive 'em for forgittin' that he was a politician and that his reputation as one of the first ilk, was much concerned in the honorable carryin's on regardin' that railroad, for it's generally understood between man and man 'round here, that no corporation scoop is to gobble the whole thing up, regardless."

"Well," replied Basil, "it seems to me that some plan may be worked out, to utilize your franchise for the benefit of yourself and neighbors, thereby securing much glory to yourself as well. I think you deserve great credit, first, for securing this valuable adjunct to a prospective enterprise, and then, that your determination to have it squarely and fittingly launched, further adds to that which should go your way, financially speaking, as well as credit and commendation. I think the people all over this section of

the state will accord you much credit and admiration, the moment the first car has passed over the line, if such an accomplishment has been brought about through an honorable system of finance, and should I have anything to do with the matter, it must be worked out through such tactics as cannot be criticised or censured."

"That's the talk," cried the old man, "and just what I knew would come off that tongue of yours, if you would have anything at all to do with it. Now what have you to propose, I don't mean in detail, but what general plan, I don't suppose one of your age and experience, can go into an elaborate scheme of finance, just like them 'devils' in the large cities, and it is because Darius Green don't believe in them kind of chaps, that cars are not now running up and down that 'Urban Valley' today and yesterday."

"Well," remarked Basil, "I have but a skeleton outline at present, but supposing you give me a 'sixty-day option on the franchise,' to enable me to work out a plan and so far execute it, that you can then know something can be accomplished."

"Well, well, of course I'll do that," cried the old man, "but can't we fix upon some sum that you can work out for me, that is, I mean, by gaddy, as to where and how I am to come in, I mean, by gaddy, would it be a partnership or stock in a corporation, or would it be by cash through a sellin' out?"

Basil thought a few moments before replying, then proposed thus to the old man: "Suppose, when the option expires, I am certain of being able to finance the proposition under a plan satisfactory to myself and desire to take up the option, then how would a plan about like this appear to you? Say you are to be paid in cash ten thousand dollars, on such terms as we can agree upon and double that amount in stock of a corporation, to be organized for the purpose of exploiting the proposition, with my personal guarantee

of ten per cent per annum income from the stock for ten years, with the understanding that you are to become 'a director of the corporation.'

"I don't know," Basil continued, "just what my mind may turn out as I think it over, but should I thresh out something that appears feasible and satisfactory to me and which I can be certain can materialize, will you for your part accept the lay-out I have made you, and to do it in a business way, sign a writing to that effect?"

"Mother, what do you say," inquired the old man, "you must be satisfied, too."

"I think, Darius Green," said mother, "I think you might go miles further and get less, and then besides get nothing, I think you can know you will be squarely dealt with and that, is worth all the money there is in it and more, too, I say emphatically, 'do it.' "

"Well, mother, you have spoken just my piece exactly, by gaddy, you have. Now Basil make out the document, but I must have a clause in that, 'so long as I live,' the franchise or the road, if built, shall not be sold directly to either of those city parties who have tried to 'Squeeze me out,' or in any way conveyed to others for their use or benefit." To this Basil readily assented.

"I never did anything in my life more willingly," cried the old man, "since I got out of my original shell, and when I can get hooked up with you, sonny, I shall feel that I have somethin' to live for, and somebody who cares whether or no I am livin', because, my boy, I am layin' some store by you and consider you, every inch a man and an able one, by gaddy."

The next morning Basil asked for pen and paper and settled himself down to the task, of writing out a form for the old man to sign, with an option contract on the trolley franchise. Before sleep had closed his eyes he had mentally worked out, what he considered would fill the bill. Moreover, Basil had given much

thought to the financial end in the promotion of this enterprise, he well knew that in corraling the old man, he had but just made a good start and his thoughts wandered over much ground and several times over the same ground, he felt that he had indeed loaded upon himself a great task, but smiled as he recalled that he had discovered about what he had been out for. In very truth, he had found "his baby" and wondered whether or not, Wesley and Jonas had yet obtained a glimpse of theirs.

Basil wrote out his ideas of what was needed, inserting in the payment contract a clause that, should the old man ever desire to sell the stock he received. Basil should have the first opportunity to purchase it at the market value, and that in case of the death of the old man, the stock should revert to the corporation, upon the payment of the market value to his estate at the time of the reversion, provided also, that should mother outlive the old man, the guaranteed income should remain hers as an annuity while living.

The papers as drawn, were satisfactory to both Mr. Green and wife, and during the day were duly executed and delivered, after which Basil was anxious to depart.

It was now so late in the afternoon when everything had been properly fixed, that Basil could not catch the last train down the line at the Danby station. In executing the papers they had to wait for the notary of the neighborhood, to return home and take acknowledgment of signatures, thus, this situation forced Basil to remain over another night, which suited the old people to a T.

As mother remarked, "I'm glad of it, for we can enjoy your company and get better acquainted."

While riding up and down that valley, Basil had all eyes out for many things that the old man did not probably guess about. One thing in particular Basil had noticed, was a quite sizable pond or lake, located

back quite a bit from the main street of one of the villages and upon one side of that lake was a beautiful grove, the lake, Basil thought, covered about five and one-half acres, and the grove about double the size of the lake and also, he estimated, about three acres of level land on the other side of the lake opposite the grove, all being fenced in as one piece of property. Now to Basil, when considering the proposition he was there to consider, this piece of land it seemed necessary to possess; here was an ideal place for a power house with water in plenty and a spur track could be laid to convey the necessary fuel, again, here was a sufficient body of water for limited boating and again a magnificent grove for picnics, the whole tract amounting to twelve acres more or less. As Basil estimated it, and it afterward proved, he had been correct in his guess.

That evening as they sat talking, Basil incidentally inquired as to who owned that tract of land in Lakeville, that embodied the lake and the grove back in the field from Main Street.

The old man thought a few moments and replied: "I think that belongs to Deacon Selden. Why, what in the darby have you in mind concernin' that?"

"Well," replied Basil, not appearing to notice the question, "does this man own anything out to the street line?"

"I think," the old man replied, "there is a place with a little old house in front, of about where the pond is that belongs to him. I'll tell you what, we'll hitch up 'the pair' in the mornin' and ride over to Steubenville, I can find a man there who will know all about it, for he is brother-in-law of Deacon Selden, married sisters you know, don't know how as they quite make that relationship, but anyhow they are related through Adam, and perhaps that is near enough, by gum."

Basil retorted, by inquiring where Deacon Selden resided.

"Oh," replied the old man, "he lives out in Bungtown, a few miles west of Lakeville, if you want to see him we can drive out there, guess 'the pair' can make it in three-quarters of an hour as it's a pretty good road. Shall we go to Steubenville first, to find out about what the deacon owns?"

"No," replied Basil, "that will advertise us too much. I think success depends greatly upon secrecy as to degree, at least, I prefer to inform people of what has been done, rather than what may be done."

"Well, well, my boy, you are 'it' and no mistake," cried the old man, "by gum, you'd make a mighty good politician with just a little schoolin'."

In the morning, off, "the speedy pair" went rapidly down the road toward old Bungtown; they had to make something over fourteen miles from the "Green Farm." "I reckon," said the old man, "that it is fourteen all right, I don't swear much by them guide board miles, by gum, never knew one to run short and my galluses can't begin to stretch out so much, as can a whole lot of them guide board miles, proportionate I mean, by gum."

After quite a lull in the conversation the old man suddenly exclaimed: "Say Basil, may I ask why, you got so greatly interested in that frog pond over there, what in the darby can you make out of that, goin' to raisin' ducks? I guess you are a 'queer chap' after all, don't ever git a swelled head, do you, them things are dangerous fellers to carry around on top of a man's shoulders and nobody cares to be warned, that he has got one that'll lead him on to a lot of trouble."

"Hold on a bit," cried Basil, "how am I going to answer all those questions, bunched all up in that fashion?"

"Well, well," cried Mr. Green, "I'll hold on and you go ahead, git up 'Tom and Jerry,' git out of this, this young man is in a hurry and the old man don't want to hang around all winter, atryin' to make out

what this miraculous young feller, is a goin' to make out of 'Deacon Selden's frog pond,' by gum, git up, git up, I say, and away went the lash upon the flying quadrupeds, and away went the whole outfit as well; all this interrupted the old man's train of thought and Basil did not have to answer the questions.

"There," the old man suddenly spoke up, "right up there on that knoll is the deacon's place, he's a queer old feller to deal with, but he's straight, that is, he'll stand by his 'greements, but he does love money all-fired well and he won't 'gree to ever'thing a body wants him ter."

"Why," retorted Basil, "why, if he is so fond of money, does he hang on to so much property, why does he not turn it into money?"

"S'pose," replied the old man, "like the rest of us poor fools, he considers property money, when out here in this country one could go hungry by bein' land poor, with never a cent in his pocket, and that is just what I, 'Darius Green,' am now a coddlin' you for, by gum, to try and fix things so's little money won't be so durned scat, to come out here and inhabit our pockets a few minutes. Why, do you not know, young man, that many of the farmers out in these hills are almost entire strangers, to what them city chaps call money and perhaps you will prove to be their deliverer, from the bondage of landholders who sometimes couldn't sell a foot, even with which to feed their babies."

Basil here interrupted, to declare his hope that the Deacon might feel disposed to duly regard money, in exchange for the "frog pond" and environments.

"Do you mean, that you want to purchase that property?" cried the old man.

"Certainly I do," replied Basil, "I have got to have it, unless the deacon has got one of your swelled heads, or because another wants the property and proportionately swells the price. We've got to have that

property, Mr. Green, for our power plant and that grove for picnics, for the use of our patrons from the big city. The pond to supply the water for the plant and boating for the picnickers, now do you not see, Mr. Green, what we are out for this day?"

"By gum, boy, I do now after you have pounded it into me, but I never thought of a puttin' the power house out here, supposed it must be located at Enderton, where there was a railroad to fetch in the coal."

"Why not haul the coal right up here on our own rails, we are supposed to haul freight for all these factories in and out, and look here, Mr. Green, if it becomes known that a move is on foot to build that road, one could not begin to touch that deacon on the price for that property, so you introduce me as a young friend of your wife's from New England, down here on a visit, and you are showing him about the country, then, in conversation, incidentally lead up to property values and sales in general, drawing out, if possible, his attitude regarding the holding of property hereabouts, in lieu of turning it into money. You understand I think how to handle the matter, now that you know we need that property. Let's attempt to get his price and get an option on it in writing, with whatever terms he will agree to, and then, we can soften him a bit perhaps when we show him the cash."

"How long an option do you want," asked the old man, "and about what terms do you need?"

"Oh," replied Basil, "only use the term factor in as liberal a degree as possible, to later obtain a cash discount upon."

"Ah, I see," cried the old man, "but your surprising proposition to purchase that property, has so upset my usual equanimity that I must confess, that I am most too dense for your company."

They now drive into the deacon's dooryard, when the old man calls out, "Good morrow, Deacon Selden, perhaps you don't know me, and perhaps you don't want to?"

"Oh yes," replied the deacon, "and have never regretted the fact, Neighbor Green, how can you think there lives a person in these parts who don't feel more or less acquainted with 'Darius Green', the famous politician and exploiter of empty railroad franchises?"

"Ha, ha, ha, yes, yes," chimed in the old man, "but property all about the neighborhood, will never be worth anything until that railroad is built."

"That's so, I agree with you on that point neighbor," retorted the deacon, "and I reckon it is up to you, that the people of this neighborhood are kept in so much unnecessary poverty. I am thinking, too, that the cause of the trouble, is your willfulness in the matter."

"Now see here, deacon, what'll you give me for my interest in that franchise, now it's put up or shut up, my dear sir, so which is it?"

"But," retorted the deacon, "you know very well, that I am not in shape to handle such a thing as that, and moreover, I have already got too much property and too little money."

"Yes, deacon, I guess you are right about that, a man should not get himself in a position to make himself land poor, and I guess you have done just that."

"I have," replied the deacon, "but knowin' my failings of the past, I would, if I could, reform a bit by letting some of my landed property depart."

"What do you mean by that, deacon, that you are going to sell something, but I fail to see how that can help you out much, for property won't bring anything, it might be a good time to buy, but to sell I don't know."

"Well, Neighbor Green, I take it that you are not obliged to, but I shall need some money before long, haven't turned anything for many a day."

"What have you in mind to sell," inquired the old man, "you own some property in Lakeville, I believe, why don't you sell the farm here and go down and live

on that property, there is already a house on it I believe."

"Well, an old thing not much good. Oh no, I should not part with my old home here, should prefer selling the Lakeville property, if I could find a party who would take the whole bunch, there is about thirteen acres altogether, the house lot is an acre and the square chunk back of it comprises about twelve acres, including pond and all, but of course water don't count for much, so the land is something like eight acres."

"What is the property worth, all told," inquired the old man, "don't know as I can buy, but I might meet someone who would."

"Well," replied the deacon, "I believe a fair value for the back land as a whole, leaving out the water, would be one hundred fifty per acre, the house lot you know fronts on Main street and is one hundred and twenty feet front, I should want a thousand for that."

The old man suddenly turned to Basil with, "What time is it, guess we must be goin'," then turning to the deacon, remarked, "I am afraid the price is prohibitive, that's higher than anything I have heard of in these parts."

"Well, what might be your idea, Darius," asked the deacon, "I don't want to be too unreasonable, because I want to sell, but if I give it away it don't alter the poverty question."

"Were I a goin' to buy it, my limit would be a hundred per acre for your eight acres and eight hundred for the house lot, for I could not regard the house anything and I believe you don't."

"Why, that only makes sixteen hundred for the whole property, heaven knows that is more than dog cheap," cried the deacon.

"It may be, when you find a man who will so consider it," retorted the old man, "we'll have to bid you good morrow, deacon, for it's high time we were a goin'."

"Wait a minute or two, Darius," anxiously requested the deacon, "let me think a bit, would you, Darius Green, give me sixteen hundred for the whole bunch and give me the cash?"

"No deacon," replied the old man, "not so fast as that, if you will give me an option on it for sixty days and give it to me in writin', I will see what I can do."

"Come into the house, Darius, and let's see if we can fix it up, you can make out a proper paper can't you, Darius?"

"Mr. Carter here is a college man and undoubtedly, he can formulate a proper form much quicker and better, than we old fellers about to enter the scrap heap, that's right, ain't it, by gum?"

Basil replied that he could and would to accommodate them, and with pen and ink being brought, proceeded to draw up the paper and soon it was ready for signature, when with a cordial "good morrow," between the old people and a polite good afternoon from Basil, "the pair" were again set under motion.

Basil suggested that they return by way of Lakeville and just glance at the property they had practically secured, although several miles further. The old man readily consented, as he was very curious to view the property as well, he had never been upon it, he only knew there were woods and a pond in back of that old house lot. They jogged along at a clipping gait, for "the pair" were a pair indeed, where the annihilation of distance was concerned. Both were busy with their thoughts and neither were inclined to express them, thus, they hardly exchanged remarks before arriving at the place of "special interest." Basil here suggested that they leave the team in "the meetin' house shed" and walk to the property, something over a half mile away, thus not to excite any interest among the village folk, another suggestion that they not stop at any place on the property, but cross it and retreat in the opposite direction from which they came, as

probably in that way no notice would be taken of them. It was, Basil believed, of much importance that the purchase of the property remain absolutely private at present. The deacon had been enjoined to silence in the matter, Basil did not want it known until he had formulated his plans and had taken up the option, because he proposed to personally acquire that property and then take something for a profit, in transferring it to the company that should later be organized, believing the property was worth much more than the price stated in the option, and as soon as it became known that the road was to be built, advances of a hundred per cent could be expected and probably realized.

The two rapidly crossed the property and regained the team, it was a sharp git up, get out and a swing of the lash and that road way was fast negotiated, arriving at the Green Farm just in good time for supper, with Basil booked there for yet another night, but the results of that day's work were sufficient, for any sort or length of delay and no mourning was thought of because it had to be.

Basil had another night to further work out his plans, everything had so far gone swimmingly his way, he had handsomely commended the old man, for the skillful method employed in securing that option, it had been slickly done he said, and yet, the price agreed upon was a fair one under present conditions, thus, he could see no impropriety in making a sharp deal, the building of the road was necessary to enhance the value of the property and was it not up to him, "Basil Carter," to find some way to get that road built, heaven only knows what obstacles he had before him, he had no money and he had no influence, true, he had acquired that franchise, but that was only a first stepping stone, capital must be dragged from the pockets and bank accounts of city capitalists, and to a very large amount, as capital was considered by Basil.

As Basil mulled over the affair after retiring for the night, he decided to first search out a competent civil engineer, to go over the route and supply him with tentative estimates of cost, thus on the morrow he would take as early a train as possible for the big city. He had the "Danby team" yet in his possession, but had communicated with the stable man so he was not uneasy about it, of course the charges would be somewhat heavy, but Basil did not worry about that, he felt that he had made good the time and expense in what had been accomplished.

In the morning at the breakfast table, they talked much of the incidents and results of the day before, and mother inquired of Basil something of his present plans, but he was not very communicative, for he had not his plans very definitely formulated, and in leaving, told them they might expect him to return at most any time to pass the night, thus, he took leave of these good people much as a son would part with his parents, in fact, there existed on both sides about the same degree of fondness as between parent and child.

Basil left the Green farm in a greatly different attitude of feeling, from that he possessed when arriving there, the dread he then experienced, had changed to fond regard for the old man, so greatly maligned by his informant at the city hotel. This gave Basil an eye opener as to what might be expected or encountered, regarding the ordinary course of human events, "one may not be so bad as painted by another, one should not altogether judge another by the painting made by another."

Basil had discovered in the old man a marked trait of determination and self regard, he also had discovered in him a tendency to combativeness whenever he adjudged another, as attempting to override the bounds of business propriety and fairness, thus, Basil could see how the feeling present

between the city people and the old man, regarding the franchise, could have been brought about. Evidently, they had attempted to acquire that franchise, as advantageously to themselves as possible, which of course is the natural way, in the average business conducted between man and man, but undoubtedly, it was not so much the act committed as the method employed, that had barked up the wrong side of the old man.

The evening following the day of leaving his aged friends, Basil found himself back at the hotel in the big city. After supper, as he sat there in the lobby, his friend who had imparted the necessary information to enable him to hunt up "his baby," came leisurely along in, and seeing Basil, took a chair near him. Conversation upon general topics soon began which led up to the stranger inquiring of Basil in a casual way, of what nature might be his business in the city, to which Basil replied, "I am looking up a couple of lines somewhat."

"Oh, a lawyer," suggested the other, "on an investigation trip for someone?"

"Well, yes," replied Basil, "it might be considered that all right, by the way, were you requested to hunt up a reliable and competent civil engineer, would you care to name the man you would seek?"

The stranger replied, "The best, actually the best in this vicinity, is George Somers and he is reasonable, quite reasonable, in his charges and thoroughly reliable, with 'mum as the word' regarding his undertakings, his place is on Fourth Street near Elm. Oh, I now recall, that you said you were somewhat in the contracting line, thus it seems easy, to account for your need of a civil engineer."

"Yes," replied Basil, as he arose, remarking of a sleepy tendency calling for retirement.

The next morning Basil called upon Mr. Somers and after an hour of conversation, in which they ar-

range, to start together the following day for Enderton by trolley, and then secure a team to leisurely pass up through old "Urban Valley" on a trip of inspection, from which to form a tentative estimate of cost to build a roadbed for Basil's trolley equipment. They expected to employ at least two days in negotiating the trip, and engaged the team with that understanding.

In due time off they were on the preliminary survey and Basil, was all eyes and ears for everything that presented itself, learning much from his associate, that afterwards stood him in good stead.

Having completed the trip of inspection and estimating, our inspectors returned to the city hotel and spent a day together in placing the estimates in proper form, then to formulate the specifications, for placing them before the contractors for bidding.

Basil left this latter work for the engineer and betook himself off upon another phase of the case, this time in learning of the inclinations and methods, of the different financial institutions in several large cities.

It was Basil's intention to finance the building of that road, by the sale of bonds to be issued upon the franchise; he did not know that such a plan had ever been attempted, or even that it were possible, but he reasoned that it could work no harm to try it out. Basil had often observed that when needed upon any transportation issue, money had always been plenty, as "the people will ride" whenever opportunity offers, thus, it comes easy as an investment in an equipment to serve them; always is transportation considered remunerative, easily explaining why, capital is always available for the building of railroads.

Basil did not overlook the fact that perhaps influence which he did not possess, might be a necessary adjunct, but never undaunted in anything he

undertook, went as fearlessly about securing the necessary capital, as he had done in obtaining the franchise. Boldly approaching the president of a large banking house, he plainly and frankly places the case before him as a supposition.

"Should a man possess a franchise for an electric road through a certain business valley, well inhabited and with no rail facilities of any kind, with many manufacturing plants along the line, with all of their frieght in and out available to this road for transportation, now, supposing such a case, would it meet your ideas of good security, by the issuance of thirty-year bonds for the money to build that road?"

A few moments' thought and the reply was, "Yes, it would be excellent security for the money, if everything suggested was present and under competent management, provided, the price of the bonds was satisfactory, no difficulty whatever to make it appear as an excellent investment, if the issue does not overburden it."

"Well, then," Basil replies, "such a proposition is now in the works, but not yet quite ready for the investing public, everything you suggest is present but the experienced management, while that I think can easily be secured."

"Kindly inform me when you are ready," replies the banker, "we will be glad to entertain a portion of the proposition, by the way, how much money will be necessary to finance the proposition?"

"I am not prepared to say at present, the estimates are not yet complete," replied Basil.

"Very well, come again when you are ready," said the banker.

Basil consulted another, and then another, and then repaired to another large city and consulted two or three there, all with much the same results. There appeared but one thing that might handicap

Basil, in his effort to successfully finance "his baby" through a bond issue as he proposed, and that was in the banker's stipulation, "efficient management"; this might mean by men of influence and well-known ability in that particular line, but, Basil reasoned, "such men can be employed, that point need not block my plan and it shall not."

Basil had now fully satisfied himself that he could and would, make his plan work and the next thing to do, was to incorporate and then have the bonds printed.

Thus a lawyer was the next proposition on hand. Basil inquired of several business men and of course, had several lawyers recommended; here, was a case of judgment and in some respects it was a gamble, but after several days he had it resolved down to three, but of these he could not determine which, and apparently there was little preference, so after becoming vexed with himself for not being able to decide, he resolved to deposit those names in his hat and draw the lucky one, or the victim, whichever it might prove to be, and thus he secured his lawyer, who was a Mr. Mason.

Basil at once upon his decision repaired to the lawyer's office and soon, they had entered into the corporation matter, with much animated spirit shown by both himself and the attorney.

The attorney was much impressed with his young client, perhaps more because he was so young, with so important a proposition for his undertakings, yet he could find no impracticable or unfeasible properties in the premises, everything had been worked out in a natural way, as if proposed by a much more experienced person in that line.

The papers were duly drawn, executed and forwarded to the secretary of state, also the form for the bond was prepared and placed in the hands of the engraver.

The engineer had now completed the specifications for the building of the roadbed, the maximum figure for cost had been determined, contractors invited to call to examine the plans and specifications, and on or before a given day to hand in their bids.

To this point everything had been kept pretty close, but few had any idea of what was going on, and the papers had been baffled also; of course it now had to come out and it did with a rush, the papers were full of it both in reporting, what they had learned and much more that they had not learned. Basil's name had not been learned, he had contrived to shield that.

The lawyer had provided the incorporators, so only their names were known, but as it was believed that the real owners thereof were a syndicate of capitalists, as is often the case, nothing was thought of that phase of the matter.

Thirty days were allowed the contractors, to bring in their construction figures and this time was employed by Basil, in preparing for and effecting the company organization.

The corporation capital was placed at "Two Hundred Thousand Dollars," to build and equip "an electric railroad seventeen miles long"; when this became known, and nothing more, there was a hue and a cry set forth that might almost be termed "a bedlam let loose." Upon the face of it, the public declared it could not be done, it never had been done, another fool had appeared and another folly was to come forth.

The engineer was sought out and plied with questions, the attorney was interviewed by several reporters, but none knew anything concerning the popularly styled "freak road." The charter was duly granted under the name of the "Urban Valley Electric Rail-

way," being authorized to transport freight and passengers without restriction.

The wonder was, how the thing could be properly built and equipped, with that small capitalization.

As the weeks passed around it began to be suspected, that the "real in'ards of the critter" were yet unknown to the public, but this kept the newspaper men busy, for it was one on them and a bad one, too, that a railroad could be projected, incorporated, organized and contracted to be built, with the "inevitable newspaper" left in ignorance as to who is who, absolutely. The incorporators' names appeared on the state records, but the paper men knew that proved nothing, dummies were plenty in any old place.

Basil was a busy man about these days, he realized his was no part of a small task.

The estimated cost of building the railway, did not call for a very large amount, there was little cutting and filling and only one small bridge, but the rails, rolling stock and power equipment, were to cost money and Basil found his bond issue must be "Six Hundred Thousand Dollars." Now would that be sufficient? He had not received definite prices for all the equipment, some of it was just estimated, and then, at what price could the bonds be sold?

Basil gathered together whatever of data he had received, and called upon three of the bankers he had before interviewed, determined if possible, to learn their ideas of what can be realized upon the bonds.

Basil is informed by the bankers that they can give ninety for the bonds and each, will take a hundred thousand dollars face value, guaranteeing full payment within ninety days.

This bond sale will furnish Basil "Five Hundred and Forty Thousand Dollars," for the construction and equipment of "his baby." Will that be sufficient? is the inquiry, the engineer believes it will.

"But," Basil inquires, "will it require it all?"

"I cannot promptly answer that," replies the engineer, "in a few days we will have the bids all in, then can be definite about it."

Basil was debating whether or not he should market the full issue, he desired no further obligation than necessary and resolved to attempt the cutting down process, should the bids exceed the preliminary estimates. One morning he had the whole bunch upon his table, which was located in the engineer's office, the total footing amounting to "Five Hundred and Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars," leaving him as a starter in operation with Fifteen Thousand.

Basil was much pleased at the present outlook and he need no longer fret over it, that "Trolley Road" is now an assured fact.

The letting of the contracts is the next thing in order and Basil, with the engineer, is busy in awarding them.

A meeting of incorporators had been held several days before, of people wholly selected by Basil Carter, an organization complete had been effected, to serve as permanent incumbent of the office.

They are now fully equipped to do business and the grading of the roadbed has begun, rolling stock ordered and the contract placed for the power plant, all these construction matters were directly in charge of the engineer.

The bonds were now printed and the amount ordered by the bankers, placed in their hands to sell to the public, the price to the capitalist being ninety-three; true, only one-half of the total amount had as yet been subscribed for, but Basil reasoned that as the work progressed, without further effort on his part, there would be a call for the remaining bonds sufficiently fast, and he was not disappointed in this.

The contracts called for completion of the work and delivery of equipment, on or before the first day of May following.

Basil had now to secure the deed of the property at Lakeville, to enable the contractors to commence upon the power plant, thus he decided to again make his aged friends and benefactors a short visit, realizing that they would be delighted to learn, from his own lips, many details relating to his progress, that the newspapers had been in ignorance of.

Basil decided to go by the same route he had taken, upon his first trip to that district, because knowing the stable keeper he could more readily obtain a team, for what might prove a somewhat extended stay; in fact, he could not say how long he might need the team.

To finance all the operations necessary to the incorporation, organization and matters incidental thereto, Basil found he had eaten into his small capital to a considerable extent. Engineer, lawyer, bond engraving and printing, hotel and traveling expenses, all had appeared to cost money; true, he had now not only a franchise, but also a full-fledged railroad corportion, he had paid his way into all this and yet, possessed one-half of his original capital.

Arriving at Danby station, Basil had an economic idea conceived and why not follow its dictates? Surely, Mr. Green would not object to use his "spanking pair" to return him to the railroad station and mayhap, he would be only delighted at the opportunity.

Basil accosted the stable man with, "How much will you charge to deliver me safe and sound, to the dooryard of Darius Green?"

"Ha, ha," cried the stable man," economical this, eh?"

"Right you are," replied Basil, "have to be, lost some of my money since last we met."

"Ah, say, my boy," retorted the stable man," how about that railroad over in the Valley that we have been reading about? Are you interested with the old man in that? Methinks that's what you are a gallivanting around in these parts about, but then, I can't

hitch on that economy of yours as a natural trait of a railroad magnate."

"Well, then," replied Basil, "perhaps you had better guess again, for there are other kinds of business sometimes going on in this neighborhood, think you not so, my man?"

"Well, as you are not inclined to be very communicative, will answer your first question and say, we will deliver you into Uncle Darius' hands for two-fifty."

"Hitch up the mare," cried Basil, "and off we'll go."

A while later the foster father and son, were grinning at each other and vigorously engaged in jolly hand-shaking, with the foster mother rushing out of the door to participate in the game, wherein the prodigal has returned.

"We've read all about it, all about the whole maneuvering," cried the mother. "Let me tell you, too, how proud and happy we are of you, my dear boy, the good Lord truly blessed this prosy old pair, when He sent you along this road, don't ever tell me again, 'Darius Green,' that nobody ever did anything for you and yours."

"Well, Basil," continued mother, "how have you been and have you been much worried over all of them complications, with engineers and lawyers and all sorts of robbers out after your money, have you got any left after having all that crowd so long on your trail?"

"Hold on, mother, by gum, by gum," cried the old man, "don't you see he is all done up a'ready and can't smooth his phiz down to reply at all, to sech a continuous volley of artillery as that, by gum, that beats all my limited knowledge, of your ability as an oration orator, land alive, what a stump speaker you would have been, if the old folks had dressed you up the proper way to make it proper." All are now convulsed

with laughter and the old man suggests they might now find time to enter the house.

"Yes, yes," retorted mother, "and Basil must be hungry, so I'll hike to the kitchen."

"Yes, yes," cried the old man, "you can talk any man hungry in the small part of no time."

Thus while dinner was being prepared the men chatted on merrily, concerning the matter uppermost in all their minds. "By gum, boy, but you did make the dry bones rattle all day and every day; we, mother and I, did go over that ere newspaper stem to stern, for every day it had some new move to tell about and never a word, as to who the new culprit in the crime was, by gum, that was gunned a mighty sight closer and sharper, than any political game I ever tried to run and they generally say, 'Darius Green' has his fences all properly close and sharply constructed, when suthin' is a doin' in politics, but, my boy, I really would like to see you run a game of politics once, by gum, I believe them shifty fellers would get more or less shifted."

"Dinner is ready," was the call, as mother appeared in the doorway. "I haven't been a bit particular," said mother, "for I am so anxious and fidgety to hear about them detail matters, as to how you managed to deal with all them different kinds of fellers and so completely, keep out of the limelight yourself, why, I never before knew of a thing or a person that didn't have any bottom, and this apparently did not have one that was worth havin', if it had, the public can't be allowed to see it."

Basil here proceeded to recite much, of how matters had been conducted to reach the present situation, the old people sat and listened, apparently enraptured at what they heard.

"There, Mr. 'Darius Green', think you now that a mistake was made, when you shifted that franchise off your old and bent shoulders? A young man is worth

two old ones at any kind of a game, in my way of thinkin'."

"Well, well, mother, I am thinkin' you well knew what I was in my younger days at any old game, and what's the use, by gum, in naggin' about deficiencies present at this late day?"

Basil here led up to the land option in Lakeville and suggested that on the morrow, they call upon the deacon and try to arrange for taking up the option, inasmuch, as the contract had been left for construction of the power plant, they must get busy at once so the contractor could go on the land.

"How do you want to fix it," inquired the old man, "suppose you have not yet obtained any cash from your bond sale?"

"No," replied Basil, "it will be some days yet before any of that will become available. I have now in pocket a thousand dollars, I'm wondering if you could spare five hundred for a couple of weeks or so, and if so, we can at once get the land deed."

"But," interrupted the old man, "it's sixteen hundred the option calls for."

"Yes, I know," retorted Basil, "but the option runs some time yet and I think if fifteen hundred, are pushed under the deacon's nose tomorrow, with a demand for that deed, the money will look so good to him that we shall get the deed, because he needs money and it may be worth more to him now than if held off until sometime later, as many times it is said, "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

"Yes, boy, guess that's good logic all right, and yes, I can spare that five hundred that you don't happen to have. We'll get behind "The Pair" after breakfast in the morning and let the deacon, smell of the fifteen hundred and if it don't nauseate him, mayhap he'll cough up that deed."

Next morning they were off. "The Pair" were feeling their oats and so also, were the pair on the

buggy seat. It might have been difficult for even an expert to have decided, which of the two was the most boyish in his deportment and the old man openly confessed "he felt mighty coltish."

"By gum," he cried, "never felt so good over any victory I ever brought forth in all my born days, even in politics, by gum."

"But," Mr. Green, interrupted Basil, "before this achievement could come to pass, you were due to secure that franchise and against, an array of formidable politicians probably, thus, your service and tact in the premises must not be belittled, personally, I am but an auxiliary or perhaps just a happening, I could certainly do no less than I have, if attempting to do anything, therefore the least I can say is that "honors are even."

"Now about the transfer of this property?" said Basil, "it must appear that I am the purchaser; having some money at hand, you influenced me to put it into this property as a permanent investment, nobody hereabouts knows or thinks it is to be used by the railroad, for it is generally believed that the power plant is to be located at Enderton and that, is where you supposed it would be you remember?"

"Yes," replied the old man, "I have heard several speak that way of the location of the power plant, so that is all right, just as everything you do is the proper one."

"The Pair" had reached the "deacon's dooryard," the deacon had seen them coming some little time before, therefore, already had screwed his wrinkly countenance up to a beaming smile, greeting his callers in, for him, an especially happy way.

"Good morrow, Neighbor Green. Good morrow, my young friend, hope I see you healthy and happy."

"Indeed you do," replied the old man, "and personally, you should be happy also, for I have so labored with this young man, who, having a little money on

hand, has decided to invest it in your Lakeville property, if the color of good money appears properly good to you. It is this way, he has right under his fist, 'fifteen hundred' as good dollars as ever Uncle Sam's machinery milled out, and that is the full size of his pile and he will swap it for a good and sufficient deed of that property."

"But," retorted the deacon, "the option price is sixteen hundred, you can help him out with the other hundred, can't you, Darius?"

"No I can't, moreover, that option has some time yet to run," replied the old man, "it is fifteen hundred right now, or perhaps sixteen hundred later, if I can find one who will swap that amount for your land, but no urgin', deacon, you know your own business, what time is it Basil, we must be off."

The deacon scratched his head, hemmed and hawed, blew his nose, pocketed his bandanna and demanded twenty-four hours to think it over, saying, "It was a surprise to him and he could not quickly decide a surprise."

But the old man cautioned the deacon, "to strike while the iron is hot," the good book you know says: 'There is no tellin' what a day may bring forth,' and this young man is soon to leave for other parts, known or unknown."

"Now, see here, Darius, supposedly this young man is the would-be purchaser, as yet, however, he has not opened his mouth concerning the deal throughout, perhaps he might relieve the pressure here present, by promising to pay over the other hundred later."

Basil here remarked, that he did not care to incur any obligation for future settlement, his dealings must be for cash alone and thus far in his business life they had been.

"Well," replied the deacon, "I am going to take your money, it's too cheap for the property, but some time may pass before another purchaser comes this

way, yet, my friends, the coming of that railroad would, if I did not need money so badly right now, sell that property for more money, fifteen hundred now will I think be worth quite as much as more would later, now let's go over to the squire's and conclude the matter."

One hour later and "The Pair" were spanking towards home, perhaps with an imaginative notion, of the good bites there present in the manger.

Arriving home duly for supper, the full account of the day's happenings were recited to mother; again she seemed glorified at what she was pleased to call Basil's "pot of luck and enormous tact."

The following week the local paper at Lakeville announced that "work upon the grading of the roadbed will commence the following Monday and simultaneously material for the substructure of the power plant, which is to be located on the north side of the pond upon the Deacon Seldon property, will begin to arrive by team from the nearby hills, that the superstructure material will not arrive until the roadbed is sufficiently complete, to allow the passing of work cars upon it, as the haul is a long one and too expensive by teams."

The aforesaid item completely stirred the rural denizens of that vicinity, especially rank did the stirring take hold of "Deacon Selden," who mentally did some cursing of "Darius Green," as he characterized that land deal. "A comsummate conspiracy," and yet why should he growl, being obliged to accept any proposition whatever, only as he had so placed himself that he coveted the other fellow's money and really, considered he must have it, he might charge that the other fellow took advantage of his necessity, but in honor bound was he not obliged to come back to himself and inquire whether or not, with the relationship reversed, he would have

done otherwise than had Basil, or as he was wont to ascribe the wrong, to Darius Green?

After supper was over and mother had her work all done up, Basil asked them to listen awhile and he would unfold to them a situation, probably very unlike anything they ever had heard of. He began by reciting some incidents of school days, with the compact made between himself and associates, when they each in turn attempted to interrupt, with exclamation of "impossible, it can't be done;" he at once silenced them by an appeal for them to listen until he was quite through, when he would answer all questions and satisfy them, with whatever information they desired.

It can be said right here, that long before he had completed his recital, his listeners' curiosity had overcome their incredulity and consternation, while both had become impregnated with the adventure to a high degree, a progressive spirit appeared to have taken a place in their lives, first, with expressions of wonderment at the conception of the scheme, and then, the actuality that had thus far arrived at completion. Yet another surprise had to be broken in upon these already greatly surprised people, the fact, that the parents of these enterprising young scions, had consented and even abetted this seemingly wild proposal, every feature of the case was indeed a problem, to these simple country folk and Basil had handled them in exactly the proper manner, to finally gain their approval and hold their interest, which now had greatly excited their curiosity, concerning the state of the game with his associates. Upon this point, however, Basil could afford them no comfort, for under the compact none should disclose their accomplishments to the others, until the next meeting of "the Alliance" at the end of the year's sojourn.

The old man emphatically declared, "that it was

the greatest, the most unheard of and unnatural proposition ever thought out by human brain, or ever attempted to execute by a human agency, that now more than ever, am I interested in the success of that Valley railroad."

Mother also tumbled into the same train and hoped to live long enough, to witness the working out of the entire plan by three such boys as that, solemnly declaring, that they had already shown the proper spirit necessary, to make it an unqualified success, saying, "I vum, I did think this railroad scheme was somethin' worth settin' up and takin' notice of, but now have discovered that to be only one end of the whole game. Now, Darius Green, in your old age and after all your pretended smartness, in a dabblin' in political nothin's and the tail end of other people's kites, you can sit up and look on to somethin' worth lookin' at and hereafter, endeavor to find and occupy your proper place and not try to straddle higher, than your straddle was made to straddle."

"Yes, yes, mother, by gum, you've said a pretty little piece and by gum, you've said it better than 'Darius Green' could, if he had practiced on it all day and part of tomorrow."

"Who of your alliance, Basil," continued the old man, "was the first to suggest this unheard-of and heretofore impossible scheme? Indeed, I should greatly like to look in the eye and shake the hand of that genius, by gum, and if it was you, I'd take that shake right now."

"Ha, ha, ha," roared Basil, "But Mr. Green, I cannot claim that honor, my chum, Wesley Hart, is the genius behind that suggestion and when you meet him, Mr. and Mrs. Green, you will soon discover that he might be quite equal to it, moreover, you will also discover that he is a greater sticker for frankness, honesty and straightaway tactics, than the

member of 'the Triple Alliance' that you are now acquainted with. I am thinking that Wesley would hardly have taken the commission for prompt payment, out of the deacon's land deal and I am a little uncertain that it should have been done, although I know it is but a common kind of business transaction, as the business world in general views such tactics. It is, however, only dishonorable in the light of 'taking advantage of another's necessity,' and can I really know, it was a necessity on the deacon's part? How can I know that it was not an agency employed as bait, to lure us on to assuming the load he was carrying and parting with our good money in his behalf, that being the case, were we not justified in requiring the cash discount? Later, we may be able to determine and if we find we were not justified, he shall receive that other hundred dollars."

"Now Basil," remarked the old man, "you have told us that the size of your capital was but two thousand dollars. I have figured a bit and cannot clearly make out that after all the time and travel, you have put together since leaving home, you can have a very full pocket after coughing up that thousand of the deacon's money. To get about and do all you have accomplished, by gum, think you must have lived on tripe and injun meal, blacked your own shoes and scraped your own face, on the place where some hair ought to grow, so if you won't take it as an insult, I'd like you to take that other five hundred, that I've got just a layin' around idler than a shiftless dog, and put it in your pocket to use when you feel like usin' it."

"Yes, yes," cried mother, "that's one of the best suggestions I have ever known you, Darius Green, to make in all the time I've known you since we up and got married."

"But, mother," retorted Darius, "how does it compare with any proposal, that I made you before we got married?"

"Now, Darius Green, as usual you can't be decent enough, to confine your remarks to the subject before the meetin', which don't antedate the date when we were both fools enough to 'up and do it,' like most everybody else does. As I was a sayin', the idea that your idea embodied, is a good one and Basil is sensible enough to discover it, so there ain't anything further to be said about that."

"But," interrupted Basil, "do you know that in accepting that kind proposal it will greatly embarrass me, for certainly it would cast a beggarly halo about me, thus causing me to lose in a measure my own self-respect, and a sum total of your confidence and kind regard, if not in very fact, then in imagination, which I fear would cause me to feel a bit uncomfortable. I have a few dollars yet abiding with me and soon, I shall again be within my own father's gates, who will probably for my good company keep me going so long as I remain, and then, the 'Urban Valley Road' will be in funds, to take over the pondgrove property and so return my money therein at present invested."

"Yes, now I see the force of your remark, Basil," retorted Darius, "it's good logic all right, but listen to me when I tell you, my arms and pocket are always open to you and your desires, because I thoroughly believe you will never abuse any privilege accorded you. Where do you think of residing when you return for real business?"

"I think for business reasons," replied Basil, "headquarters for the railroad should be at Enderton and that, is the logical place for me to anchor in."

"I am glad of that," said mother, "for that is only about twenty-three miles away and 'The Pair,' can easily put us down there in two hours, just a good ride you know and enjoyable, very, whenever we feel a longin' to see you. By the way, Basil,

suppose you are intendin' to set up housekeepin' like most everybody else does?"

"Haw, haw, haw," shouted Darius, "I wonder that ere query haint come afore this late hour, by gum, mother, you should have bestowed upon you, 'a leather medal cased in roses', for holding on to your curiosity-bump like that, for it certainly is a great feat when accomplished by a woman."

"Now stop, Darius Green, right there, as that subject is not up before this meetin', you are always a gittin' out of order on the wrong side of everything and everybody."

"Haw, haw, haw," roared both Basil and the old man, when Basil with a broad grin remarked:

"Mrs. Green, you have surmised more or less correctly, according to the most natural course of events, that will probably come to pass upon a day, perhaps not in a most remote future, it has been said that 'everything in life desires to mate', thus it would seem as 'folly to be wise', in that I should set myself up as an exception, to the law of nature and the rule of mankind."

"Yes, I see," replied mother, "but is she all ready—

"Ha, ha, ha," again roared the old man, "she's a comin' again Basil, I 'spected it, by gum I did," and observing Basil to hesitate a bit, immediately turned the subject by inquiring about the company organization. Who have you located for directors, Basil, fixed it, I suppose, so you will know who is who and what is goin' to be done about it?"

"Why, yes," was the reply, "I think so, you see it was this way, I had the franchise through your kindness and I procured that pond-grove property, again through your aid and intercession. The attorney and engineer both decided, the franchise is fully worth the amount of the capital stock, and the pond-grove property for the purpose of a Company

Asset, is worth ten thousand dollars, therefore, I could legally acquire the full amount of the stock for the franchise and rightfully, receive in cash the value of the grove property, so I compromised the property matter and sold the company, the property for one-half the adjusted valuation, thus, the full issue of stock comes to me, there are 'two thousand shares at one hundred dollars per share, par value.' Now two hundred of these shares are to be issued to 'Darius Green' as per our agreement, fifty shares are for George Somers, the engineer, the same amount to each of the following: Lawyer E. J. Mason and Jason Carter, the remaining shares to Basil Carter; these constitute the board of directors, who are to meet tomorrow at Enderton to elect officers," and handing out a paper, "this is your notice of the meeting, Mr. Green."

"Well, well, well, by gum, Basil, you've did that up well, who's who, I guess you are fully aware of all there is to that end, by gum, mother, you sized that sizing up mighty right when you sized up "Basil Carter."

"Well, Basil, we'll let 'The Pair' spank us over to Enderton in the morning and take our time a comin' back."

"But," retorted Basil, "I am not to return. After the meeting is adjourned, I shall arrange as soon as possible to depart for New England, as I would enjoy being home on New Year's day when the young people there, generally enjoy an old-fashioned 'country pow-wow,' for the entertainment of those who celebrated the fete, thirty to forty years before."

"Are your 'Alliance Associates' to return in time for that," inquired mother?

"I do not know, neither do they know that I am to be present, never a word has passed between us in the brief communication we have had, regarding anything we were doing or intended to do. It was under-

stood when we parted, that only our health and location from time to time were to be mentioned, and truly indeed, has that understanding been sacredly kept inviolate, as has every other stipulation thus far encountered. We are all due to be there present together on the first day of March, then to disclose everything past, present and future."

"I can't get all this satisfactorily into my head," cried the old man, "it don't fit into anything I ever knew or read about, every minute I am more and more interested in the final outcome, of such an impossible possibility as that would be, with any other combination of human nature, but by gum, if there could be more, much more of such brotherly, confidential, unselfish and magnanimous relationship, among men, what a paradise to live in would be this old world of ours."

The morning saw them off, including mother, for she desired to do some shopping while they were attending to business and so, be company for her husband on his return. "The Pair" were up and dressed in their best spirits and spanked over that twenty-three miles of hill and vale country road, at a gait that would put many a beast to shame and which, so caused the bracing December atmosphere to affect mother's cheeks, as to call forth the remark from Darius, that mother was again comin' back to her own, as he knew her when at last she consented to that first kiss.

"Darius Green, you simple simpletonian, silly of all silliness, I'm completely and absolutely ashamed of you. I never consented, you know I never did, you stole it, you know you did and you got a slapped face for your pains and your punishment. I never, no I never expected with all your failings, Darius Green, to observe you as one having lost all decency and become the pitiable and senseless object, that that silly and wicked remark has proclaimed you to be."

Arriving at Enderton, they, the men and mother, separated until after the meeting, when they were to lunch together.

The meeting went off in due form, everything as Basil had suggested, but Basil relied much upon what suggestions had been made by the attorney and engineer, as to requirements and policies. Basil was not a conceited pig-headed fellow at all, he realized he had much to learn concerning business in general and especially, the running of a railroad.

The engineer was a very practical man and had seen a lot of experience demonstrated by others. Moreover, Basil knew a practical railroad man would be secured as superintendent and with such men as associates, he was unconcerned as to the success in the management end of his enterprise.

The revenue possibility also appeared assured. Surely there would be sufficient traffic from the start, to more than care for the current expenses; moreover, the traffic must certainly increase from the big cities near both ends of his road, by involving the pond and the pretty grove for picnic parties throughout the summer, as he expected to have the road open to the public on the first of June, the best time in the whole year, as nearly a full season's business could then be counted upon.

The directors were all enthusiastic concerning the enterprise, believing with the small capitalization involved, the road would earn a large percentage on the stock.

To continue to know who's who, Basil had exacted from each one of the stockholders an agreement or compact to the effect, that whenever they each and severally ceased from any cause or reason, to be a director in the corporation, their holding of stock should be returned to Basil, from whom they had received it practically as a loan, but theirs to all intents and purposes so far as the income was concerned, actually,

the income upon this stock was their compensation for serving as directors, thus, their best interest and service was secured for the benefit of the enterprise.

Basil, and, as he termed them, his benefactors, parted for the time with tender feelings of regret. they had become very fond of each other and the good-bys had come forth with much effort, especially on the part of the old people, this very likely because they were old and that thought, undoubtedly saddened them when suggested by the vigor of youth, displayed so plainly through Basil's incessant activity and youthful enthusiasm.

"The Pair" were dashingly off with their aged passengers, for their home upon the hills, while Basil proceeded to complete his arrangements for leaving for his home and friends.

First, he called upon the bankers having in charge the marketing of the bonds, so popular had the offering been, that no concern was necessary regarding that end of the proposition, the financing of the enterprise was already an assured success, Basil suddenly realized and with some surprise to himself, that "his baby" had already attained not only life, but health, strength, importance and popularity, occupying an indispensable position in the transportation problem of the nation, besides, assuring Basil a remuneration sufficiently large, for his contribution to "The Triple Alliance," as he now believed, equal to that of his Alliance Associates, even though they may have made a hit in selecting "their babies".

Now that the officers had been chosen, with Basil as president, George Somers, treasurer, and Attorney Mason's son, secretary, the stock was issued and the pond-grove property turned over to the company, Basil thereby receiving the money therefor from the treasury, which now had received about half of the bond money. Everything had been accomplished that could be, until the contractors had performed their tasks.

Basil was now prepared to start on his homeward trip, except to return the five hundred borrowed of Mr. Green, which he did by check and found he had, after settling everything he was obligated for, including the first payment on the franchise of two thousand, on hand, twenty-two hundred and fifty dollars and seventeen hundred and fifty shares of "Urban Valley railroad stock". All this from a two thousand dollar capital in possession, when starting out ten months before.

Thus instead of Mr. Green loaning him five hundred as he desired to do, Basil had returned his loan of five hundred and two thousand besides on the franchise payment. The old man was taken completely off his pins, when receiving the check for twenty-five hundred dollars. Basil had not intimated to him that he was at present going to pay over this money, although he had all the time expected to do it before returning home.

It was admitted by financiers in the big city, that Basil Carter had everybody beaten to a frazzle in the game of finance.

Wishing Basil a joyful home reception, let's ascertain what has befallen Wesley Hart, for evil or for good.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROHIB AND THE SPOOK

Wesley, after leaving Denver, had in mind to visit some mining plants he had read about while in Denver, two of which were located in southern Montana, quite a way north to be sure, but location counted for but little against a good prospective. At the first one that could claim his attention, he found something greatly interesting, so far as witnessing what took place. At a very busy well-conducted and exceedingly profitable gold proposition, all owned by a syndicate of eastern capitalists, in full charge, however, of a western man as superintendent, who seemed to delight in receiving Wesley as a guest and imparting to him such information, as would have required years of real experience to acquire a full knowledge of.

Wesley was invited to his home and made to feel as though he was one of them. This home was crude in some respects, and yet, much refinement was practiced by its inmates, indeed, it was considered one of the best the country afforded. One of the family was a boy about the age of Wesley. Although very much alike in that respect, they were miles apart in many others and yet there was a common interest in sympathies between them, relating to some traits of character, but the antagonism manifest in some ways seemed to cement them all the closer together.

The father of this young man was well to do and doted upon his young scion; he had provided him a good education as education goes in common life, not however, a first-class college equipment, but sufficient for any condition in life he will be likely to encounter.

The young man in question is Selkirk Graham, who will appear often as this story unfolds, having been employed about the works of his father as a

wage earner, more through an interest to secure a proper training for him in that vocation, than for the wages he might receive. He liked the business and knew it as an exceedingly profitable one, in all probability he would follow it from his father.

During Wesley's stay of about two weeks, the boys were much together; this with the interest the father had shown in entertaining and educating Wesley, as to the byways and happenings constantly and sometimes unexpectedly occurring, was of paramount value for availability later.

Mr. Graham, senior, seemed much pleased to learn that Wesley, was intending to take up mining of some sort and said: "If a man possesses the nerve, the stick-to-it-iveness, the pluck and proper degree of determination, coupled with a high regard for honor and justice, I believe there is no better vocation than straight-away mining.

"Now see here, my young friend," exclaimed Mr. Graham, "I have discovered in you something more, than appears in the average young man and would be glad to assist you in locating, but I would recommend a location farther south. There are quite as good conditions for gold mining in Colorado and the climate is not as severe; again, one is near, or comparatively so, to large cities, this is an advantage in many ways, not the least is for a base of supplies, and then, society is an important factor for a young man to consider. What is life anyway without opportunity for enjoyment, money getting is honorable and necessary to a certain extent, but it is or should be only incidental, the most important thing is happiness. I intend to have my boy locate in a more neighborly and perhaps better civilized section than is Montana, he will follow his father as to occupation but not in location. I did not come up here until well along in life, as a young man I never would have come. This property has more than doubled its profits since and naturally, they

desire to retain me, to do that, they refuse no demand of mine."

"The conditions here and in Colorado," continues Mr. Graham, "call for much the same requirements in outfit and maintenance, thus all you have seen here, will serve you in good stead should you locate down there.

"I have a brother-in-law in Colorado, that I have intended to have assist in locating my boy, if you think of going back there, I will write him a good word for you, Denver is of course the central figure for all things in Colorado, he is quite well acquainted and probably can put you in line with some excellent prospects, he is some older than I am and retired, I believe pretty well fixed and has no children to set up in business."

Monday morning was soon present, Mr. Graham had written his letter of recommendation to his brother-in-law, Wesley had taken it all sealed and addressed, but did not notice the address as he deposited it in his pocket.

While rolling rapidly across the country, Wesley engaged his thoughts with the occurrences of the past three weeks, a longer time than he had expected to remain, but time passes so rapidly when one is being entertained in an interesting manner. Wesley muses, "I have been fortunate indeed in my newly found friends, the people in the west are truly cordial and I certainly should be an abominating ingrate, to forget or overlook in the slightest degree, these good people who have treated me thus kindly. Who could have believed a stranger complete of my youthful type, ever could have acquired that property in the manner, in which I obtained it of that genially kind Mr. Hunt?"

Right here, is the very important point that Wesley in his musing overlooked, "the youthful type" as he put it, the old man had lived longer in the world than had Wesley, human nature had been one of his studies,

he had learned from his observations that youth, unsophisticated youth, had not, generally speaking, yet acquired the scheming untrustworthy habits, that frequent and continuous intercourse with business men, in their onward rush for yet another dollar is very likely to force upon it.

"So much for what is behind," mused Wesley, "but what of that which is before?" He was yet to meet other stranger acquaintances, the letter in his pocket would disclose to him one. "What, I wonder, will he be like?" The fact that he had been suggested by one so considerate in his behalf, should be good evidence in advance that he was not to encounter a monster and a smile passed over his countenance, as he contemplated another interesting and entertaining character crossing his pathway.

So greatly interested in coming events as portrayed by his happy thoughts, Wesley's curiosity here began to assert its rights. "Who is this man and what is his name, this brother-in-law of that kindly beneficent Mr. Graham? Why, I have it in my pocket, ha, ha, now indeed, I will endeavor to analyze something of his character from his name." Drawing the letter from his pocket, what was his surprise, amounting almost to consternation, as he read "Jabez I. Hunt, Third Street, Denver, Colorado," in plain writing upon the envelope. Over and over again Wesley read that address. "Can it be possible there is another of the same name living upon the same street, yes possible, but not probable, what dragons of fate to thus decree, such complications in my environments, it appears to lead almost to tragedy of some future day, with my pathway so elaborately strewn with mysterious and yet happy perplexities."

Throughout that long ride, Wesley had no concern for those sitting about him, it is doubtful that he was even aware that there were others, as his thoughts galloped along at so rapid and interesting a pace. Here

he was with a letter of introduction, supposedly, to one of his best friends and even a benefactor indeed, certain it was to Wesley, that the addressee on that letter envelope was his friend of the land deal in Denver, for there it was plainly the same as upon the land conveyance. Had he been guilty of deceiving Mr. Graham, no, it could not be termed that, it might be, however, that he was an innocent deceiver, whatever that might be considered, but to turn the table, had his friend Mr. Hunt known of his intention to trip Montana, a letter of introduction to his brother-in-law, Mr. Graham, would have been accorded him and the complexity of that case, could have involved not even innocent deceit.

Hour after hour Wesley went over the complex matter, sometimes wearing a smile that longed to linger, but was forced off the countenance by some dreadful thought of possibilities, until vexed with imagination that it should thus torture him with its vague pretentions, Wesley arose from his seat and strode across the car, continually repeating, "What's the use of all this fuss and fucle," what am I, that vague rumors should thus upset me, what crime have I committed that I should be punished by doubts, that may lead to rank disappointments? I have dealt honorably with all of whom I have had to do, and now, has this bright vision which has so kindly raised my hopes and aspirations, because of an unkind fate to depart from me? Alas! I have cherished fond thoughts of what might come to pass, were the "Jabez I. Hunt" of the letter address, the "Jabez I. Hunt" I already know. A new friend indeed was it thus to remain, a friend indeed more fully intensified, through the significance of a kindly relationship introduction, or is it to be a stranger indeed, how nice to receive a recommend to one's friend and benefactor, to justify the opinion and further warrant the confidence already bestowed.

Upon arrival at the Denver station, Wesley at once entered the hotel and inquired for the city directory and eagerly his eyes passed on down the column of H's, Hunt, Hunt, Hunt, but only one Jabez, only one, that one the very one he knew, the very street number, no mistake possible now, his doubts being dispelled, his vision of happiness seriously settled upon his countenance. A good omen it seemed to Wesley, that these two relatives, living so far apart, should arrive at the same conclusion regarding him, it seemed to increase Wesley's own self-respect, he had not been conceited, perhaps not sufficiently considerate had he been in that respect; in fact, he always had abhorred the trait of conceit in anyone, yet, it is but human to crave the high regard of one's fellowmen, when one is so debased as to be unappreciative in this respect, that one has ceased to be truly and fully human, thus, Wesley Hart was forced to be merrily happy with the conditions and circumstances, under which he believed a kind fate had decreed should be his, thinking, however, that it should not be placed to his credit, as he had but simply blundered along. True, he had decided to gamble on that land purchase, but was he entitled to credit for gambling? Wesley was a great arguer with Wesley, many hours he spent in the task of locating himself as between a right and a wrong.

Wesley, after much discussion with himself, decided to hold that letter of introduction a few days, thus to learn if possible whether or not, any stir or interest in his land deal had been noticed in "The Gas and Electric Company," he would prefer to turn that property before approaching Mr. Hunt with his letter and thus decided to bide his time.

A few days after his return, Wesley accidentally met one of his former acquaintances, the one who had furnished what information he had in first locating Mr. Hunt. They met very cordially and soon Wesley's land deal seemed to automatically dodge into their conver-

sation, through the passing of the president of "The Gas and Electric Company."

"There goes Baker, president of 'Gas and Electric Company,'" remarked Wesley's friend. "By the way, Mr. Hart, how about that Hunt property deal, you pulled that off amazing smart, but what has bothered us all, is what you had to give for it and if the old man fixed it, so it could never go to 'The Gas Company.' He has been dead set against them for several years, vowing he would never again have any dealings with them, guess they had some trouble about the line between them, there seemed to be some difference in a later survey, regarding the width from what the original survey had made it, and I understand 'The Gas Company' beat the old man in the controversy, guess it may prove an expensive beat for them if they ever attempt to acquire that land, for every hand property passes through adds another toll and what they obtained from the old man through the controversy, was but a few feet anyway. Suppose you don't indicate what you may do with the property?"

"No," replied Wesley," don't know myself, had a little money lying around and thought it certainly wouldn't run away if placed there."

"No," retorted the other, "one of my friends was inquired of the other day by a man in the gas office, if he knew where to locate the man who purchased that Hunt property. When asked by my friend why, the reply was, "Oh, nothing much, curiosity perhaps," but that did not satisfy my friend, he said he counted less on what he said than in the way he said it."

"Has anything much, been said regarding that transfer?" inquired Wesley.

"Yes," was the reply," a lot was said soon after the transaction, but now it has sorter died down as it was learned the purchaser had left town. Mayhap there were some inquiries at the hotel after you left as to your whereabouts, perhaps the clerk there can inform you."

"Oh, I don't care anything about it, I am not offering the property for sale."

"Oh, that being the case, nobody need become interested at all, but that Gas Company will finally get that property nevertheless," was the final remark, as the speaker departed.

That evening, as Wesley strolled along past the office counter at the hotel, a man who had been looking over the register inquired of the clerk if he knew Mr. Wesley Hart, whose name appeared there.

The clerk replied, "I do not, for he came in while the other clerk was on duty, but I will soon be able to point him out."

"But," retorted the other, "can't you ascertain if he is not in his room? I want to meet him right away."

The bell button was pushed, no response, pushed again with the same result.

"Well," impatiently remarked the other, "you get on to him soon as you can and I will call later, tell him a man will call, nine thirty, who wants to see him tonight."

Wesley had lingered near and the inquirer had been a bit boisterous in conversation, thus Wesley had experienced no difficulty in catching the tenor of his remarks and inquiries. Wesley had recognized the man inquiring for him as the man his friend had said was Mr. Baker, president of "The Gas and Electric Company," and soon as he was well outside the door, Wesley hiked for his room, collected his belongings, and suitcase in hand, repaired to the office desk and asked for his bill, saying he was in a hurry to catch the train, tossed over the money quickly and started for the door, when the clerk who had now gotten himself together, called "Mr. Hart," upon Wesley turning.

"A gentleman was here awhile ago inquiring for you, left word he would call again nine thirty, must see you to-night, what shall I tell him?"

"Tell him just what you see, that I am leaving,

I am not expecting to meet anyone here and am a stranger in the city, thus it cannot be of sufficient importance for me to defer my departure, may return in a few days, can't tell certain."

"But your address, will you object to leaving that?"

"The Empire house, Pueblo, for a limited time, may go east from there, not certain yet."

There was no train out for Pueblo that night, but one left at seven in the morning.

Wesley at once proceeded to another hotel much nearer the railroad station and secured a room, notifying the clerk that under no circumstances should he be disturbed, even if he did not appear until after eight o'clock, as he desired a good long night's rest. Thus effectively heading off any further attempt on the part of Mr. Baker to reach him, he retired. Should they by accidental inquiry locate him, he was snug out of their reach until eight o'clock and then he will have been an hour out of Denver.

Arriving at Pueblo in early evening, after his call at the dining room he chanced to pick up a daily evening paper only out about an hour ago, and glancing along the news columns of the first page, his eye met a heading that at once attracted and held his interest, until he had concluded the reading of the article.

This was quite a lengthy announcement of the "improvements planned by the Denver 'Gas and Electric Company,' estimates for the construction of which are now being made by contractors from several cities," stating also, "that the improvements are so extensive as to require the purchase of additional land adjoining their present ownership."

Here was a pointer indeed, for Wesley, he now could put two and two together which he believed would make for him more than four.

Wesley's purpose in coming to Pueblo was to avoid meeting Mr. Baker in Denver. He reasoned that to make him run after him, would truly emphasize his

anxiety to meet Wesley, which also would naturally convey the impression that they must have his land, thus giving Wesley a tip concerning their necessity, and therefore excuse him for acting the natural part of the human, in demanding a good price for his property.

Wesley was prepared to meet Mr. Baker now, should Mr. Baker elect to come to him. He purposed to remain where he was and patiently bide his time and was more than glad that he had not met Mr. Hunt, believing that when he did, he could now cancel his debt and therefore assume an independent position, not in a boastful way, however, for he realized that it had been through the unexampled kindness and trust of Mr. Hunt, that he had attained his present advantage over a "soulless corporation."

The following day a wire was received by Wesley, that "Mr. Baker of Denver" was leaving on the morning train for Pueblo on important business with him, with the injunction "to remain until his arrival."

Wesley received and read this pleasing telegram with more pleasurable satisfaction, than any news he recalled ever having received and he knew it was but a natural feeling, of the kind of satisfaction that generally satisfies.

Wesley spent the day in doing every matter of interest that came to his attention, until late in the afternoon, when he repaired to his hotel and then to his room, leaving instructions with the clerk that he was not to be disturbed.

About six o'clock came a rap on his door. "What's wanted?" Wesley called out.

"A gentleman desires to see you at once upon important business."

"I am busy at present," was the reply, a few moments later another rap.

"What's the matter now, I left orders at the office I was not to be disturbed."

"Beg pardon, but the gentleman desires me to hand in his card."

"What's on the card?" inquired Wesley.

"Mr. E. W. Baker, Denver, Colorado," was the reply.

"Well, send him up, if he must see me at once."

A few minutes later another rap, Wesley swung the door and beheld a large pompous looking man, very like some he had before met who imagine they are "really it."

"Is this Mr. Hart," inquired the gentleman.

"I happen to carry that name, if you please, sir, what happens to bring you hither? I trust nothing of much moment, being very busy at my writing and had not expected to be disturbed."

"But I wired you this morning, that I was leaving Denver to see you upon an important matter."

"Ah, yes, I recall," replied Wesley, "walk in and I will listen."

This little sally had really placed Mr. Baker, in a somewhat embarrassing position and one in which he generally intended to place the other fellow, thus he keenly felt the disadvantage that he must now labor under, being quite chagrined at being thus placed by this young and saucy scion of some dare-devil or other. The situation was really a mortifying one for this willful austere autocrat, thus for the moment, his ire was so greatly aroused that he hesitated, as to the policy to be employed in opening up the object of his visit, Wesley assuming in meantime a wondering expectant attitude.

Mr. Baker finally pulled himself together, remarking, "I believe you were recently in Denver, Mr. Hart, and I attempted to see you there, but as I learned at your hotel had just missed you."

"Yes," casually remarked Wesley, "such things do happen sometimes."

"Not often with me, however," retorted Mr. Baker, "people generally are anxious to meet me, my young friend, to accommodate themselves to my needs and wishes, for I am a busy man and when I wish to meet

a man, that man knows or should know, that the case in hand is of some moment."

"Of some moment to whom, Mr. Baker," inquired Wesley, "to you or to whom you wish to meet?"

"Well I'll be darned, if you are not the coolest young fry I have ever had the misfortune to meet. Young man, do you not know, that age should be greatly respected by youth? Do you not know, that your attitude towards me is discourteous?"

"Mr. Baker, you have intimated that 'important business' prompted your desire to meet me, surely the discussion of ethics cannot be the subject matter, which prompted you to employ so much of your valuable time, in coming all this distance to simply meet a perfect stranger, I have been patiently waiting and with a courteous patience, for you to unfold the matter at present nearest to your heart, my attitude has been that of a willing listener, until—"

"Well, well, Mr. Hart, let's have no more ethics, but to business."

"Exactly," replied Wesley, "I am anxiously and curiously listening to ascertain, what possible matter we can have in common."

"Nothing in common, my young sir, nothing," was the retort.

"Ah, I see," replied Wesley, "the difference in our ages and experience really precludes the possibility of anything very closely in common, your riper judgement and more extended experience in matters of dealing between men, places me not as a foe worthy of your fine steel and thus, I beg pardon for having assumed as a possibility any matter in common between us."

In exasperation, Mr. Baker blurted out, "You own some property in Denver that I want, now I suggest that our wordy war be declared off, for I confess to having been beaten, you, young man, are a match for any man's steel, suppose you are quite

willing to part with the property with a fair price involved?"

"No, Mr. Baker, I don't suppose I shall part with it at present, thinking it will very likely appreciate during the next few years, being young can afford to wait, you know."

"How did you ever happen to secure the property? We endeavored to get it some years ago, but could do nothing with the old man, don't see how you managed him, or I did not until I met you, now I am not so much surprised."

"I only practiced straight tactics, met the old gentleman in a straightforward frank manner and today, he is my very good friend and I intend to keep him so."

"Well, Mr. Hart, what is your price for the property, anyway, you will sell it won't you?" anxiously inquired Mr. Baker.

"What, in your opinion, Mr. Baker, is the property worth? I may have overestimated it when purchasing it and thus, be obliged to hold it a time for a rise."

"I suppose five thousand may be a little high, but will give that for it, because I can use it with other property to good advantage, more so, probably, than any other party will ever be able to do, what do you say to that figure Mr. Hart, probably that affords you a good profit?"

"No, Mr. Baker, I think you will not be able or willing to satisfy me, therefore, our time will not be well spent in further discussing the matter."

"But, Mr. Hart, you have not mentioned any base upon which we might discuss the matter and it seems unfair as it stands, I have at your solicitation named a value, following it with an offer for the property, it is your next move and I am waiting, I expect you to receive a fair profit. It is yours by right through good business, you were fortunate in securing it, I

may say you are in our way and we logically, have to compensate you in order to remove you, so speak out your price and scoop in your money, use it again and reap another profit, that is the way money makes money and without great effort on the part of its owner."

"Mr. Baker," calmly remarked Wesley, "your ideas of the value of that property and mine are so very different, I feel that it would almost amount to a piece of folly, should I name any price that would or could be satisfactory to me."

"But fire away all the same," retorted the other, "I have before now been hit as hard I believe, as you will be liable to strike, so fire away young man, it will do no harm even should I refuse to allow it to harm me. Certainly you can be entirely safe, and of course from what you have intimated, I am prepared to hear you name a figure somewhat greater than the one I have named, and yet I have a natural right to expect fairness as between man and man."

"Right there, Mr. Baker, is the pith of the whole matter and just the point I have already made, you are a little expecting how I regard the situation, but now I will name a price for that land, the only price I will give you and I expect you will accept it, or leave the matter entirely and not attempt to dicker with me regarding it. Mr. Baker, you can own that property upon the payment in cash of Twelve Thousand Five hundred Dollars, it is now up to you."

For several minutes Mr. Baker opened not his mouth and they were minutes of intense suspense for both, on Wesley's part fearing he had overreached, on Mr. Baker's part, in scheming how he might circumvent the other and with no scruples as to method, whatever its baseness, thus, it was a matter of "dog eat dog," with the devil looking on and eagerly waiting to send up a cheer for the victor.

Old Mr. Hunt had so lavishly expounded the

traits of "The Gas and Electric Company" to Wesley, that he, being forewarned, had taken occasion to become forearmed, and had resolved that a company practicing no tactics but "squeezing tactics," should put up no squeeze upon him.

Finally, Mr. Baker inquired, "Well, can I have the refusal at that figure for one week in order to confer with my associates?"

Wesley replied, "Not without a deposit of two thousand dollars, one-half to be forfeited in case of no sale, the deposit to be placed in one of the banks here with instructions accordingly."

"Do you insist upon this deposit?" inquired Mr. Baker?

"I do," replied Wesley.

"Young man, I have to say, you are the most 'cold blooded' affair in the shape of a business man I have ever encountered."

"And," retorted Wesley, "I have to say, I think I have never before met your equal on those lines, therefore, have to consider 'honors are even' with appearances indicating as I suspected sometime ago, that between us there would be nothing doing."

"Can you hand out a clear title, young man," inquired Mr. Baker, "and can you execute the papers here to that effect?"

"I can hand out just what was handed out to me," replied Wesley, "a clear deed otherwise than subject to a mortgage of fifteen hundred dollars. An attorney can fix up the proper papers in the morning if desired."

Mr. Baker, rising, asked for an appointment at ten o'clock tomorrow morning, in which to close up the deal as he felt now that he would do.

"It is outrageous, young man, the cold fact is, we need the property to carry out our plans, otherwise you would not find opportunity to put over so sharp a game. We are actually making you a present outright of Five Thousand."

"But," retorted Wesley, "you don't have to, neither would you pay me more than Five Thousand were you not forced to obtain the property; it practically was 'a squeeze' upon one or the other, and conditions placed the ace in my hands, otherwise, no mercy or consideration would have placed, this crown of gold upon the head of Wesley Hart."

Our scrappers met on the morrow as agreed, sauntered into a lawyer's office and had the necessary papers drawn and executed, which conveyed Wesley's property to "The Gas and Electric Company," when up to the point of settlement Wesley learned that Mr. Baker had, after leaving him the night before, repaired to the telegraph office to communicate with his people, for an arrangement with the bank to wire a Pueblo bank, the amount necessary to complete this deal, also instructing his attorney in Denver to examine the records and wire condition of title to the p roperty, thus, Wesley now learned some reason for Mr. Baker's desire for time.

Before the dinner hour arrived they had completed the transaction and Wesley had a "banker's check" in his pocket for the amount involved, less the Fifteen Hundred on the mortgage, and on the late afternoon train Mr. Baker departed for his home in Denver.

When taking leave of Wesley, Mr. Baker took occasion to say: "My young friend, I have to congratulate you upon the possession of business tact, unusual with young men in general and possessed by few of maturer experience and years, you played that game without an error and yet I have to confess you played it fairly, I am regarded as an old war horse stalking abroad in the land, with a relentless purpose to secure what I want in the way I want and through the most rigid principles of business, without fear or favor. My best asset with which to accomplish my aims, is the pose and autocratic spirit

that I adopt in making my approach, and this you completely and permanently subdued at the outset, it has never before been done, and I firmly believed it could not be done, thus I have learned to hereafter feel out my antagonist a bit before dropping on to him. Let us part as friends, my boy, we can have no further use for the cards we have played in our attempt to win out, I wish you much luck in your business career and feel justified in predicting, that you will be well able to care well for the best interests of Wesley Hart. Goodby, my boy, we may meet again."

"Goodby, Mr. Baker," retorted Wesley, "I bear you no malice and wish you much joy, in thanking you heartily for your congratulation."

Left alone with his musings, Wesley sat several hours regardless of whatever might environ him, he was all in a world by himself, what had he done and how had he done it to find himself now possessed of so much capital, never before had he gazed upon so much money in one lump sum and now, as he drew the check from his pocket, feasted his eyes upon its face, this all his very own. After deducting the full price demanded and paid for the property, here was eight thousand dollars, which added to the fifteen hundred he had furnished toward first payment, actually forced his present capital up to the colossal sum of nine thousand five hundred dollars. "Well now," Wesley exclaims, "that really is going some, fiddlesticks and oxbows, really, I wonder if Jonas and Basil can beat that, oh my, but did not those happenings happen all right? Wesley Hart has not a thing on fate."

Kind and considerate fate to me, Wesley Hart,
Wilt thou in future, deal kindly as at the start
And take to thy bosom, Basil and Jonas Kent,
That they may share thy bounty, wherever they went.

Wesley now having aroused himself from his pleasurable musings, decided to at once cancel his obligation to his kind friend Mr. Hunt and would mail him a banker's check in the morning for the amount, enclosing also the letter of introduction so kindly furnished by his Montana friend. This however, might now appear a bit stale, and yet it was of as much import as ever, to prove that others had shared the same confidence as did Mr. Hunt, but why this confidence, Wesley was just too dense to account for it.

The next morning Wesley was up and doing rather early and appeared at the dining room door, before "the goose was entirely cooked," when a pretty and fetching waitress accosted him with, "Guess you were troubled in your sleep last night, my early friend, which whetted your appetite to a keen condition, else you would not have forestalled the cook, and I have to tell you that you are ahead of the game."

"Beg pardon, my pretty maid," was Wesley's retort, "the kind decrees of fate are responsible for my early buoyant feelings and time I noted not; has my untimely presence upset conventional propriety and incidentally thyself as well?"

"Not at all, kind sir," replied the maid, "so far as thy gracious self is concerned, it was but your inconvenience that made me thus bold to assail you, for which I now recognize the need of gracious apology, but now, if thee will seat thyself, I soon will serve thee."

"Thanks, my pretty maid," replied Wesley, "thee may serve me as thou wilt, encompassing the goose around about with whatever that is good, that thy bright eyes shall rest upon." With an amusing smile the maid sallied forth to the cook's department, leaving Wesley smiling expectant at what might, after that jolly incident be placed before him.

That Wesley was well served need not be here recorded, for the pleasure the maid had enjoyed in that brief tilt, was certain to be compensated for and each meal thereafter taken at that hotel, was spiced with being served by the "witty bright-eyed maid" of the early morning encounter, as Wesley always looked for a plate at her table and if arriving when the table was fully occupied, he made it a point to await a vacancy, and thus, as Wesley had occasion later to often lunch in Pueblo, these two became fast friends, and who shall say that no tips were ever handed over to that maid, for service rendered at that table, this only illustrated another of the bright spots in a life beaming with joy and good wishes for others, and Wesley was one ever observant of opportunity, to hand out a gracious greeting wherever and to whomever permissible.

The second evening following Mr. Baker's departure, Wesley chanced to take up a morning Denver paper and there, upon the first page, in glaring headlines read, "Gas and Electric Company after a long and persistent chase, captured the retreating owner of the 'Hunt property,' which they have recently desired to do, and incidentally have captured 'the deed to the property.' The owner alluded to was but a 'strolling Yankee' from old New England, who in performing this 'Yankee trick,' handed out pointers to certain stupid or willful Denverites, and it is surmised that in return for these kindly pointers, that 'strolling Yankee' has lugged off a goodly pile of Denver gold. The amount, however, is withheld, but the 'cussing attitude of the purchasers,' is prime evidence that a battle was waged concerning the price and the Yankee won out; how often it occurs that a stranger, a real tramp, enters the fold and complacently strolls off with a 'fat lamb of the flock,' while the 'native wolves' sit idly by and stare."

Wesley also noticed an announcement of a sale, "A good mining prospect." He read the article through

with some interest, considered it might be worth while to investigate, but concluded to defer the trip a day or two, meantime watch out for droppings that might drop, moreover, other property sales might be announced shortly.

Around this section Mr. Graham had said, "are located as good mineral deposits as have been elsewhere located, also this section of the state is more in keeping with social life." Here, one might find a desirable neighborhood in which to locate and Wesley already had acquired an especial liking for Pueblo, it was a nice town with every improvement that Denver possessed and really, a finished city in which anyone could contentedly abide, but the mining prospects were somewhat remote from the city proper, even twenty or thirty miles away, but that did not matter materially, as a railroad run to the mining district, thus, a ride of an hour or more or less would cover the distance from home to business and that, was already in vogue in many parts of the country.

Wesley had now obtained some sort of inkling, that Pueblo might become his future home; however, he realized that much was yet to be done in securing "his baby," and if discovered he might not be able to meet the requirements, should he discover a prospect somewhat developed, could he manage to obtain possession of it with his limited capital. True, he had thought his pile an enormous one, but yet he realized its insignificance, when coupled with what he would like to obtain, he preferred to secure a developed claim even though he incurred some obligation therefor.

Two days later Wesley noticed in a Pueblo paper, announcement of another "property sale," this time at auction with the property located at Rockville, a mining camp about twenty-five miles west of Pueblo; the other sale was a private one, located at Parkvale on the same line of railway about two miles further distant, both being on a branch of main line railroad.

The same day evening, Wesley, seated in the hotel lobby, listened to an animated conversation concerning these two sales, carried on between some half a dozen rather rough looking fellows, supposedly miners in some capacity or other. The consensus of opinion seemed to regard the auction sale, as having the best sort of property, but all seemed to admit that it would sell for a much greater price than was asked for the other, two of the men had worked in the auction property several years before and their remarks concerning it were flattering indeed.

The property at private sale had not been greatly developed, as they described it to each other it was indeed a hole in the ground all right, and with good ore at the bottom, work in which had been suspended because of a murderous battle, between four workmen in which two had been killed. This had hoodooed that "hole in the ground" sufficient to prevent further operation, for none would enter it since the removal of the dead bodies. They who removed them swore to having heard the most unearthly calls from within the walls of that working, that ever had entered human ears, miners as a class being a superstitious lot, this was sufficient to condemn the property in their eyes.

Several of the group declared they would not work in that ground for any old pay, while one remarked he wished he had "the dough" to take it over, declaring, "it is one of the best prospects in the neighborhood and there will come along some day a man "who is not a fool" and will in working that property prove everybody hereabouts "a consummate fool, for letting that remain there all these years, because of a "fool notion" born of a "pair of fools," who took two "dead fools" out of that hole."

"Well," said another, "I'm with you on that Jim, if somebody would open there I'd work in it, because I believe the operator could afford to pay higher wages, than's now agoin' hereabouts. I believe that prop-

erty's got the stuff, why, Dod Jones said what they histed the last three or four days, was the richest stuff he ever saw, believed t'would average up a full thousand t' the ton and I believe had they kept at it, t'would have been one of the richest properties in this old state by this time."

"Well, what's to be done about it," inquired the first speaker, "who's got 'the dough' to take either of 'em over, the old man Jackson ownin' the Rockvale mine wants to sell bad enough, but he is a callin' for some money, when considerin' it's really a drownded critter, been full of water for a half dozen years and with them ghosts and goblins, a chatterin' their 'dog-goned chatter of some evil one' every day in the week 'cept Sundays, suppose then they 'tend Sunday school, a kinder 'lettin' go ter git a better hold'."

"Well," remarked Jim, 't'other mine is another drownded rat, only it has been drownded a right smart spell longer, say, it has been fourteen year since the last human bein' emigrated out, o'nt, but them fellers did pull up a lot of real stuff a sinkin' that air shaft. Bob Trick worked in there along at the last and he tole me, they pulled up stuff that went over two thousand ter the ton and the vein, grew wider and richer every foot they went down. Now, what do you know about that?" inquired Jim.

"I think," replied the other, "that property would sell high if the water was out, but them dog-goned lawyers want their fees for a carryin' on them suits so long and I some 'spect, that whoever's got enough 'dough' to satisfy them fellers claim, will git a bargain at a bargain price; of course I 'spect it's several thousand they've piled on to it, but they got an order from the court to sell it, nobody knows who is the actual owner and nobody knows who to give the money to, if it fetches more than the claims up agin it, so there you are and I'm a bit curious to know how that'll come out."

"Well, s'posin' nobody bids as much as the claims?" inquired Jim.

"Then," replied the other, "the claimers will have to take over the property, or else they've got to drop a fraction of their claim and take what's offered, b'gosh, really, I don't 'spect they's anybody round here, that's got 'ready dough' enough ter git it, but I wish I had dough enough to git that Parkvale mine."

"Ain't got no rich relation anywhere's have ye?" inquires Jim.

"No," replied the other, "the last I had was buried by a Woodchuck, 'cause there want anybody else that would do it without pay and I think he hated to, but I couldn't do it 'cause I had the rum-atiz and I hadn't dough enough to pay for a good shave, so couldn't afford to waste what I did have on poor relation, when there wa'n't no prospect that they'd even try to earn it when they could, so you see, there's no hope of my ever becomin' proprietor of either one of them 'holes in the ground'."

Wesley had noticed that the man behind the desk, had listened with some interest to the uncouth chatter, of these crude samples of the human family, and as Wesley had sat very near, this man had occasionally winked at him with a pleased countenance of approval, at much that had been remarked, thus after these good hearted crude specimens had retired, Wesley approached the counter and casually remarked:

"Those fellows are some up on value of certain prospects, hereabouts to be marketed soon, are opinions of such men considered reliable regarding that kind of property?"

"Why yes," was the reply, "generally speaking, they pretty well know about those things, for they are right in it all the time and whenever they come to town, everything they know as individuals becomes general knowledge; if there is any spook business anywhere they scatter the affair far and near, but those

three who had so much to say about these properties that are soon to be sold, are unusually bright and posted, the one addressed as Jack, was a personal chum of one of the fellows who owned the Rockvale property and sunk the shaft there. I have known this man Jack for several years and believe him straight and reliable, thus, I was some interested in what was said between them."

"They don't seem to have an idea that the Rockvale property will bring out very high bids," remarked Wesley, "if it is as good as they think, why not? Is there nobody in this section who cares to invest in such propositions?"

"Well, there are those sometimes," was the reply, "but those are abandoned prospects and that puts a black mark against them for some. This man Jack told me one day the whole story, about how the Rockvale mine became an abandoned prospect, it was quite interesting, too. I see you are registered from New England, looking for western investment, eh?"

"Why, just strolling about the country," replied Wesley, "recently had some business in Denver, now on my way toward Kansas City."

"Ah, I see," replied the other.

"Does that man Jack, often drop in here?" Wesley inquired.

"Yes," was the reply, "nearly every evening just now, I believe he is some out of sorts and kinder resting up a bit, hit him up when he comes in again, he'll interest you all right."

The second evening the man Jack again appeared, strolled over to near where Wesley was seated, drew up a chair, and said to Wesley, "Good morrow, my friend, making quite a stay here I think, maybe I saw you here night before the last one."

"Yes," replied Wesley, "I am here for a few days, quite a nice town this, never was here before."

"Don't belong hereabouts likely, is it?"

"No," replied Wesley, "I hail from old New England, strolling about on a trip to note what may be noted hither and yon, ever trip it to old New England, my friend?"

"No, b'gosh, never could git that far away from where I was dropped," retorted Jack. "We fellers out this way are a contented set of cusses, don't know much and don't hanker after much I s'pose, what we do know is muchly regardin' our own occupation, some on us know a little about that, perhaps we cal'late we know more'n we do know even about that. They be some prospects round about that news about don't git outside much, some spooky property sometimes, that outsiders don't want to hear about and much less put any 'dough' in ter, and often they, 'the spook kind,' are 'mighty good shakes', just the thing I'd put 'dough' in ter if I could git it to put."

"But, I suppose," replied Wesley, "they cannot obtain the necessary men to enter such uncanny places."

"Well," replied Jack, "some don't have any courage to spare in that direction, but men can be got if the prospect is it will warrant good pay, show me 'dough enough' and I'll find the men all right, b'gosh, by the way, now I think on't, there's a 'spook prospect' right now offered for sale, located on the branch over at Parkvale, it's got a record all right for good pay dirt and it's got another one for 'spooks,' but I never yet heerd that a 'spook' actually yet hurt anybody, who went right along 'bout his own business, howsomever, that property recently fell ter old man Jackson, who of course can't work it and won't bother with it himself. It's advertised for sale now, and if I had the 'dough' b'gosh, them 'spooks' 'd have to vacate or they'd have a battle on hand. Too good pickin's lays in that air ground to warrant leavin' it for sech fellers as 'spooks', b'gosh, who won't never make anything out on't for the good of the human family in general, or anyone else in pertic'lar."

"Do you really know about the mineral deposit on that property, 'real actual knowledge,' I mean," inquired Wesley.

"I know some about it, it's been nigh seven year since it got spooky, before that, my brother-in-law worked there a sinkin' that shaft and there was three others workin' with him, they'd got into the ore at about sixty foot, and when about six feet in ter the ore, which was allfired wealthy, b'gosh, why, man alive, it went better'n a couple o' thousan' ter ton, one o' the fools fetched along a demijohn o' rotten whiskey and the ho'l lot got some rotten drunk, they quit altogether a diggin' money and declared war in a go-as-you-please way; and when the dove of peace flew in there, b'gosh, two on 'em had drunk his last 'rot' an' dug his last 'dough'; the other two soon appeared on the top o' the hole, wild-eyed bloody countenance'd and entirely sober, b'gosh, declarin', 'they never'd ag'in go into that bloody hole.' Two others were sent down to pick up the scatterin' parts o'er what was left, and to this day never another has went there, the relief party severely swore the howlin's they heard was too much for human ears."

"Why don't some of you fellows chip in together and secure this property?" asked Wesley. "If so good as you think, were I one of you and understood the game, I sure would gamble on this."

"Why not gamble as it is, my good friend, there is a pot o' 'good dough' there and there is another good pot in that one that's to be sold at auction over at Rockvale."

"How about that?" inquired Wesley.

"Well, b'gosh," replied Jack, "that was abandoned nigh fifteen year ago, but not for the same reason t'other one was and no 'spooks' live in that as I ever heard on, but, b'gosh, I b'lieve that'll pan out more 'dough' ter the ton than t'other, that however is got

a history that's charmin' ter listen ter. If you don't mind I'll tell a thing or two about it."

"Go on, my friend, retorted Wesley, "I will be glad to listen to anything that's amusing and with your quaint way of dubbing things together, I am certain to be interested, so trudge along, old man."

"I can't hitch things and doin's up into artistic style," remarked Jack, "but I'll give 'em to yer straight, for a good friend o' mine was one o' the interested parties, he and another feller was one day a huntin' over high top mountain and my friend, Robert Dorn was his name, stubbed one of his big toes a'gin somethin' cause he didn't lift it high enough; as he sprawled on the ground his gun took the darndest notion ever, to up and go off, Bob always swore he never could imagine how that trigger got pulled, but the lead got busy with the dirt right there near his left leg, tore up a mess on't and most on't, he said, went in the direction of his mouth, which as luck would have it, was at the time wide open, b'gosh.

"Bob afterward said he tasted and tasted some more, to find out what in thunder he was a eatin'; he knew well enough it was mineral, but never had any idea he had a mouth chuck full of gold until he rolled over and found that air gun had just stirred up the durndest mess of the shining yaller, that he ever got so near to in all his born days. Well, then, that set 'em to a thinkin' and then to lookin', that old gun had barked up a streak o' gold about a inch wide and they followed it along for several hundred foot, then ag'in they went a huntin', but this time for a pickax and shovel; the next hunt they undertook was for the records of that county, to file a claim on that durned stumbling block and soon after to begin a diggin' a hole, as they went down foot after foot the streak showed wider and wider some more, b'gosh, they got down forty foot and that air streak was over a foot wide, rich, well, b'gosh, it was, another forty foot

down an' they had a yaller streak more than two foot, at a hundred and fifty foot they had over four foot o' stuff and richer, well, b'gosh, it certainly was, and they decided to go to two hundred and then drift on the vein, which they found about six feet wide, of the wealthiest stuff ever took out in all this region, anyhow, it could give up better than two thousand for every ton histed, and not impoverish itself entirely at that.

"The shaft they was a diggin' was eight foot on the vein and they had took out enough ore and sent it down the mountain on boro backs, to hand them over twenty thousan' dollars, right here and at two hundred foot. Bob contracted for a good dose of newsmoney, and in less than a week had sent in his last check, for he had got through a diggin' 'dough,' b'gosh. Then in less than a month later his pardner had handed in his mental checks, decidin' that 'a lunyhouse' was a better spot to abide in than a 'hole in the ground,' until arter he had lost his breath; durned poor luck, b'gosh, for them 'dough diggers' and mighty poor luck for that 'hole in the ground,' too, b'gosh.

"Well, to resume, the water seeped in before the heirs, if they was any, could pull themselves together enough to tell who's who an' how to git there, an' 'that hole in the ground,' was no more a hole, but a fine representation of prohibition, really the most effective of any I ever heerd on, for the enterin' of that air hole was prohibited by the best ally the prohibs ever found to assist 'em, in a beatin' all creation out of its liquor."

"Ha, ha, ha," roared Wesley, "go on old man, there's more material waiting to be heard from, I'll wager."

"Well, I guess," retorted the other, "the sequel always has to come later. There the water was, a holdin' guard on that 'yallar dough' below. Bob's pardner didn't stan' it long after his wits had left for other

climes, so here was two estates to settle somehow, about 'that filled up hole in the ground.' Bob then had a father about ready to pass over his checks, and no other kin that anybody knew anything about, Bob's pardner had only an aged aunt.

"Well, the durned lawyers hiked into the affair an' invited in every other lawyer they were acquainted with, ter tail in an' help 'em to gobble up the property and then, like a band of bank robbers, divvy up the swag after the lawsuit had outlived the aged heirs, thus, that state of affairs continued on, an' then some more, until both the owners gave up the Ghost in very disgust, an' I think must have prayed the Good Lord, to deliver 'em out of the hands an' possession of that set of shyster demagogues, an' this condition was sanctioned by our honorable courts. Fourteen years have passed since these useless limbs of the law, had opened their clutches to gobble up this hole and now, they have got hungry for their 'dough'.

"The tax collector said there was somethin' comin' to him and all-around, good an' interested participants got their noses ter facin' each other an figured out, that they wanted their dough and had waited long enough fer it, so next we know about it, that 'probition hole' is a goin' ter be put on the block, to see what all creation will decide to do, about the settlin' of them legality claims."

"How much do you think the sum total of those claims will amount to?" inquired Wesley.

"The tax man says his claim is about one hundred and sixty dollars, Job Strecker, who is in one of them shyster offices, says the legal fees all told will be around seven thousan' dollars, with interest compounded each year added, so I figger that to make 'em all good the bid will have to reach nine thousan', a snug sum o' dough surely, but, b'gosh, it's wuth it and then some, if I had the dough, it wouldn't take me long ter git in my bid for a square ten thousan'."

"But," retorted Wesley, "supposing the bidding does not go over eight thousand or even seven, what will they do?"

"I dunno," replied the other, "but if the bids don't reach their figger it might scare 'em a bit, so they might take somethin' off, contract a compromise, you know, suppose the tax man'll have to have his'n full anyway, the law won't let him compromise, but his'n ain't much anyway, why not you, my young friend, see somethin' good in that, I don't want to be too brazen like, but I'd like darned well to take hold an' be held accountable ter makin' good out o' that 'prohibition hole'."

"Well, I don't know about so great a gamble as that, think it needs an older head than mine to tackle an affair requiring so great an outlay, the purchase price is but a beginning you know, but my friend, you have greatly excited my curiosity and I would very much like to look that ground over, how near can one get to the property by railroad train?"

"Oh, right close to it at the base of the mountain, so near a spur track could be laid right up to the crusher, I would be pleased to pilot you out there, chargin' you nothin' for the service."

"Now see here, you are a stranger to me, what I want to know is, can I seal your everlasting leaky mouth, can I be assured that should I go out there with you, that nobody shall hear of it from you, can I take you into my confidence if I decide to act in any way, concerning either of the property sales, that are soon to be affected here?"

"B'gosh, that's goin' some, the first time in all my long journey on this wicked planet, that anybody has asked 'old Jack Loon' if he can be trusted to hold his gobble, b'gosh, guess I better begin to write off my last checks, for my usefulness must be a gettin' stale, poor old Jack. Never s'posed t'was a comin'

to this, but my young friend my only intelligent reply can be, 'just try me and see'."

The next morning Wesley and Jack took the train for Rockvale, to inspect the "prohibition hole," and environments. Jack had with him a pick-ax, having the notion that somethin' good might "be tumbled out of that dump," as he expressed it, adding, "them fellers that dug this hole I never thought was a savin' crowd anyway, and I don't b'lieve they practiced any unnatural traits when they histed that stuff out."

In about an hour and a quarter they found themselves upon the property, but to inspect the digging had quite a hard climb of about three hundred feet rise, which they reached in due time, when Jack immediately tackled that dump pile, soon revealing that which even astonished him, notwithstanding his expectations had been considerable, finally, stopping short off, he turned to Wesley with a confident smile, at same time ejaculating: "By the holy Moses, the dough has never more'n half been taken outer that dirt, them fellers had orter died, b'gosh, an' they'd orter a died a durned sight quicker, an it's a durned mighty good thing they decided to do it when they did, that was wasteful an' silly, go down in that 'ere hole an' dig an' delve a diggin' that hole out an' then, let all that 'good dough' waste its fragrance in that 'ere dump pile, b'gosh that's the worst ever."

"Well, well," cried Wesley, "what's in it, what are you raving about, anyway?"

"See here, boss," came the quick retort, "if there's a thing in that 'ere pile, there's two hundred dollars o' dough in every ton, now, if I am a gettin' old an' stale, I know what I am talkin' about now."

"How many tons of dirt are there in that pile?" inquired Wesley. Now don't let's see any swelled head about this, let's know the facts concerning everything we talk about today."

"Well, I'll be bunged up an' snatched," replied Jack, "if there ain't more'n two hundred ton o' natural ore dirt in that 'ere pile, b'gosh."

"Then do you mean that it contains around forty thousand dollars worth of mineral?"

"That's my religious cal'lation, if it's all took out, but pro'bly they'll never git it quite all, safe enough to call it thirty five thousan' b'gosh, an' I won't drop another cent."

Two hours was spent on this property by our inspectors, when Wesley suggested they go down and take a look at the Jackson.

"No train around this time, b'gosh," remarked the old man, "as for me, I could easily enough hoof it down the track, but you could'nt think on't."

"Stop it, old man," cried Wesley, "you may not know just what you are up against, I am younger than you and supposed to have more ginger."

"Yes," retorted Jack, "but young ginger is too fresh to mix in with old ginger without workin' harm to both, it would completely tire out your kind an' would weaken mine to drag you along, or worse yet, wait for you to ketch up."

"As you remarked last night," said Wesley, "try me and see," and off they went down the track, with Wesley never behind and Jack a blowing at his windpipe.

"The Jackson" was scrutinized the best possible, only a small dump was here present showing mineral, as only about three days working in ore had been put in, thus the dump could be but a small one containing mineral, but this, Jack attacked with his pick and found quite some of mineral content, and the workers had said it was very rich as it lay in the ground, now if only the water was absent in that shaft, but it was not so, here was another gamble all right.

It was now nearing the time for the afternoon

train to leave, only two trains a day each way over this branch, and this was the end of the line, so they must go at once to insure against being left for overnight.

Mr. Jackson, who had come into possession of this property, lived in Colorado Springs, so it was decided to trip it up there the following day for interview, Wesley had now told Jack that he might consider one of these properties and as the auction of the Rockvale property was not to take place until the following week, it was desirable to know "who's who and what can be done about it," concerning the Parkvale property before the other was sold.

"Yes," Jack replied, "and I know an old feller up there livin' now, that worked in the 'Prohibition' quite a time with them fellers and we can add to our pointers on that by a seein' him."

The trip was made to the Springs, Mr. Jackson looked up and found to be a very nice and affable old gentlemen. He said at the outset, he knew nothing of mining and little concerning the mine, or prospect he had advertised for sale, it came to him he said through a nephew that he had known little of, adding, there is some superstition among miners regarding it, because of the tragedy happening there several years ago.

"What do you call it worth?" aside to Mr. Jackson, inquired Wesley.

"Why, I don't really know," was the reply, "but I had in mind five thousand dollars; suppose it is a gamble more or less at any old price, but I will consider any offer that you care to make, that is within reason."

"I have not made up my mind concerning it," retorted Wesley, "but might, after further considering the matter, make you a definite proposition, which I will do in a few days, if you do not dispose

of it before I can arrive at a conclusion. I desire to see one or two parties, who I understand had been employed about there some."

"Very well, Mr. Hart," replied the other, "supposing I give you the refusal of it for two weeks, that is, agree to wait that long before offering it to another."

"Yes," replied Wesley, "I would appreciate that very much, and will see you again in the meantime."

They then hunted up Jack's information man, whose story was very flattering concerning both the properties involved in Wesley's investigation, thus, Wesley was enjoying some amusing thoughts almost perhaps of a dreaming nature, certainly upon the face of things visible, he may have located "his baby."

The auction day arrived, the sale was to take place on the property, all went out upon the same train, except a few stragglers who lived in the neighborhood, and Wesley noticed there were few indeed, not more than a dozen alighted from the train.

The auctioneer started the bids at five thousand. Nobody for several minutes raised it, when the auctioneer briskly remarked, "You know, gentleman, under the law I can't sell without two bids," when one sarcastically blurted out, "Have you got one lawful bid a'ready and ef yer ain't, what right have yer got ter be talkin' about two?"

Wesley was glad to have this suggestion made, but did not think it good policy to make it himself.

The auctioneer replied by asking the question, "If I have not a first bid will you start it at that?"

"No," was the reply, "and there hain't a man here that will, for if that ain't a legal bid the second one won't be a legal one, thus it is necessary to know who's who and what's a doin'."

"Well," retorted the auctioneer, I have orders to start it at five thousand and the party stands ready

to take it over at that, if we can't get another bid there will be no sale. The terms of the sale are cash, gentlemen, who will raise the present bid?"

The bystander who had before interrupted, remarked that, "the cash terms will certainly put the sale out of business, there ain't that much dough in the whole crowd an' t'would cost more'n that to git that prohibition stuff out o' that hole, a man couldn't pay over all he had to git the property and have nothin' left to git it liquored up with."

The crowd laughed at the sally, but no one spoke a bid.

Jack and Wesley stood together at the outer line of the circle, exchanging remarks in a low tone, soon the auctioneer noticed them and pointedly called out:—"There's a gentleman over there that is probably here from sheer curiosity, for he certainly is no miner, I wager he dare not make a bid."

All eyes were now turned that way, and seeing Jack so close to Wesley, many who knew him at once thought something might yet be doing from that quarter.

The auctioneer lingered for quite a while, hoping to get a second bid or a real outside bid.

Finally, Wesley spoke in a pleasant sort of way, "I'll raise the present figure five hundred for the sake of holding the sale, I am not a mining man, however."

The auctioneer at once took it up, and now there will have to be a sale, but it was slow and tedious work to worm another bid out of the crowd, finally, a well-dressed man raised it again five hundred, but Wesley felt certain that the bid was made in the interest of the selling parties, although Jack said the bidder was not one of the lawyers, or any of the clerks in any of their offices and he did not think he was a Pueblo man at all.

The auctioneer kept looking expectantly at

Wesley, but not a muscle of his mouth moved and no other bid was made, the property was struck off to the last bidder, so it stood at six thousand and the crowd departed for the train, which had been a special from the junction.

While waiting at the junction for the eastern express, the successful bidder engaged Wesley in conversation, resulting in an appointment to meet at the office of Messrs. Simpson, the attorneys who had sold the property.

The following day Wesley kept the appointment made at the office of Simpson Brothers, when upon entering, the man with whom he had made the appointment advanced, took his hand and smilingly turned to a large nice looking gentleman with, "Mr. Simpson, meet and greet Mr. Wesley Hart, the gentleman who made the bid on the Rockvale property yesterday."

"Happy to meet you, Mr. Hart, walk in and take a seat with us, sorry you did not get that property yesterday, for we all believe it a great catch.

"Well, it may be truly so," said Wesley, "I have never said or thought that it was not, but 'great catches' usually excite some interest among those in the vicinity of their location, which this did not seem to do, so it did seem surprising that not one who had means of knowing something regarding its importance and value, should attempt to make a bid unless it be that it started off too rank. To an outsider it seemed, that the auctioneer's bid was more than a proper value for the property."

"No," replied the other, "I don't think that was the trouble, it was the terms more than the price I believe, those fellows that were present never pay cash for anything, but it is not their habit, moreover, they rarely have that much cash in hand at one time, if they get money they'll do something with it, they don't keep it for a scoop when it comes along, but the

circumstances are such in this case, that the matter has to be closed up, being an old sore of long standing."

"Well, it is of course, immaterial with me," replied Wesley, "there being no bid to hold the sale, I simply thought that if clinched it would have to go on, somebody would bid. I am simply a stroller looking the country over, happened along here and noting the auction sale advertisement, for want of anything better to do at the time, accompanied a man I had made a hotel acquaintance of out to the sale."

"But," retorted Mr. Simpson, "have you no desire whatever for the property, supposing it had been struck off at your bid, would you have completed the transaction according to the terms prescribed?"

"I certainly should, Mr. Simpson, I'm never 'a quitter,' if you please, but naturally, I can have no special desire for that type of property."

"But if you are no quitter, you did begin on this by making a bid, which you say you would have honored had it been struck off to you, now, then, why quit where you are?"

"But," retorted Wesley, "I do not understand what may be in your mind to make that remark, the matter has apparently been closed. The gentleman said you would like to see me, so I have appeared and am waiting to have you open up, the conversation thus far has indicated no special purpose in inviting me hither."

"You seem to be frank and businesslike, Mr. Hart, and I have to tell you in an equally frank manner, that which I now believe you already know, that the sale was simply a legal bidding off of the property by the parties selling it, under the order of the court. We had hoped the bids would sum up to the amount of the claims against it, but that not being the case, we were forced to take it and now, do you care to consider the purchase of it at eight thousand dollars as a cash trade?"

"I do not," replied Wesley, "did I, it could have been secured at the auction, and right you are that I believed it was being bid in."

"Well," replied Mr. Simpson, "will you make a proposal? We will entertain any reasonable proposition you may make."

"Oh no," Wesley replied, "I have no offer to make, when I can't see my way clear to meet a man on his price, I just turn the other way and think no more about it, every owner has a perfect right to name his price, and as well, every would-be purchaser has the right to refuse its consideration even."

"Why will you not name a figure suitable to yourself, Mr. Hart, it could work you no harm even were it refused."

"Perhaps not as much harm as if it were accepted," retorted Wesley, "and especially in this case, that property is possible to prove an elephant upon the hands of whoever gets it and I may be, too young and inexperienced to adopt an elephant," while in rising, Wesley suggested it was time to go.

"Will you give seven thousand, Mr. Hart?"

"I think not, Mr. Simpson, but I will give you what you bid it off for. I consider you set the price when you made the bid, you could not have known there would be another one, and thus you settled it."

'Can't accept that," replied Mr. Simpson, "but if you will make it five hundred better, we will make out the deed."

"Good morning, Mr. Simpson, we can remain friends all the same," proceeding through the door.

When outside, his friend, the bidder at the auction, had followed him out.

"One moment, Mr. Hart, should Mr. Simpson accept your offer, will it be convenient to at once settle in cash payment?"

"Yes," replied Wesley, "as soon as the deed is prepared, but I must have a certified abstract of title."

"Come back a moment, it can be all arranged by four o'clock this afternoon, I think."

Wesley again entered the office, met Mr. Simpson with a broad smile. I see Mr. Simpson, one in these parts don't often meet an 'easy going Yankee,' and when one is met, the people here like to imitate the leech and not only stick to him persistently, but never let go until his ready cash passes across."

With a ha, ha, ha, Mr. Simpson retorted, "Young man, there will be no leech ever long stick to 'this Yankee' and he will certainly let go, I wager if he don't, 'the Yankee will get his dough,' I accept your offer, Mr. Hart, and the deed will be ready with the abstracts at four o'clock."

Wesley met Jack outside and together they strolled about the city after taking lunch. Jack could not refrain from often speaking of Wesley's deal, he did not know at what price the controversy ended with, but believed it was not above seven thousand, of a sudden he spoke out while they were at lunch: "Mr. Hart, by all the eternal that's good, bad and indifferent, you have got the best cinch in 'Prohibition,' that any Prohib ever got on the durndest liquor dealer that ever sold liquor, b'gosh, you have took on the best gamble that ever was gambled, and put it down in your little book, that old 'Jack Loon' says 'your pile o' dough' is assured and also b'lieves it'll be the fust 'good dough', anybody ever made out o' 'prohibition', guess it's a goin' to turn the tables o' morality t'other side up, for it's been the liquor end that's made the 'dough' thus far since Adam's time. I'm mighty glad that it's 'a young Yankee' that's got in on that, to show some o' these sore heads in Colorado, who's who an' that the bright ones ain't all in this state and vicinity, b'gosh, I am that."

At four o'clock Wesley dropped round to "the Simpson office" for his deed, and of course Jack was along. It did not take many minutes to look over the

deed and abstracts, and pass over the "banker's check" he had procured for the proper amount, by exchanging therefor the Denver check obtained from Mr. Baker; this transaction now left Wesley a check on the Pueblo bank of thirty-five hundred, which was his present working capital, all other being permanently tied up.

Jack was in high spirit, Wesley had intimated to him that he was to be connected in some authoritative capacity and Jack's faith in "Prohibition" was so strong. he intended to use his uttermost endeavor to not only have it make good, but to have it "beat all creation as a gold and silver mine," as he believed it could do, and wanted to be at it the very next day, but that was not to be.

The property had been secured, but yet the proposition had to be financed, from what he had observed when a guest of Mr. Graham, Wesley believed from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars would be necessary to safely start with, but Wesley had another fish to fry before attempting to finance "the Prohibition", he was to again meet Mr. Jackson, and now that the other deal had been complete and the morning papers would herald it abroad, he planned to take the early morning train for Colorado Springs, to acquire ownership if possible of the Jackson property.

Wesley had already planned out a satisfactory way, to himself at least, to finance the proposition when he should have acquired both properties, but not a word had he said to another concerning his intentions.

A little before noon Wesley arrived at Mr. Jackson's home. The old man was glad to see him, remarking, "Ah, you are an early bird I see, wasn't expecting you at present, but it is the early bird that gets the best worm, and that's the bird that one should believe in, my boy. Well, how goes the battle, it's been raging since you were here I suppose, and know-

est thou at this hour, who's who and what you are going to do about it? I wager a big apple that something is on your mind and methinks I see it in your eye."

"Yes," retorted Wesley, "one's mind never should lie dormant and the eye fail to talk, else for what good purpose is this God created form of human intelligence, and why, was it placed upon the earthly planet of a God in heaven, should not every human life be governed by the sentiment of a fitting proverb, thusly, "Let no low descending sun, look not upon some worthy action done."

"Well, Mr. Jackson," continued Wesley, "mayhap we can arrive at some satisfactory plan, regarding the prospect over at Parkvale. I have given the matter much thought and"—from the kitchen came the summons, "Dinner is served."

"Yes, yes," cried the old man, "we'll be there most surely, come Mr. Hart, we can't properly transact straight business, when the inner basket is calling for tribute thereto, so let's get busy with the present matter in hand."

The dinner hour was a long one, these good people were greatly interested in all that Wesley could tell them, of eastern conditions and ways of the people, moreover, the part of his chatter concerning himself and associates in connection with their Alliance, seemed to emphasize their almost spellbound interest. The old man was greatly amused at this unusual, and as he termed it, "a seemingly impossible plan" to carry through to a successful and satisfactory finish.

Mrs. Jackson, however, declared she could see nothing impossible or impractical, if human beings would be human as they were intended to be, declaring further, that with just one word blotted off the human vocabulary, nothing would be easier than such an alliance as these three delightfully admirable scions,

are engaged in bringing to a complete and successful issue, it really does my old soul good to learn that there are those now living, willing and capable of attempting to bring about a condition planned out and undoubtedly longed for, by the creator all through the ages. We are told in the "good book" that the true millennium cannot and will not dawn, until such human spirit as these lads exhibit shall have become inherent, in the inhabitants of this God created paradise. The one word "selfishness" is more guilty than all others of frustrating the kind plans of Almighty God, in behalf of the children of Adam.

"Well, mother, you have really spread yourself in delivering, one of the best indictments of the human family I ever listened to."

"Bravo for Mrs. Jackson," cried Wesley, "and a righteous hurrah for Mr. Jackson, in truly appreciating her impromptu effort; it is grand, grand, I shall always carry it with me and herald it forth."

After a good hearty laugh, Wesley and Mr. Jackson repaired to the living room and resumed their business conversation. Wesley unfolded his plans for financing his recent acquirement, affording him the benefit of the many favorable reports and opinions regarding the "Prohibition" as a mining prospect, to all of which the old man listened with increasing interest, presently ejaculating:

"You seem to have a plenty in nerve and enterprise, my young friend, and I have noted in the ideas expressed by you, that you are a person of unlimited resourceful abilities and sufficient, to warrant the success of anything you may undertake, thus, while such are some of your traits, I should consider you a safe person to tie up to, but seemingly the sad part of it for me is, that you have already secured 'the baby' you have been searching for, thus, no substantial comfort arising through your abilities can likely come my way, however, I cannot do less than to hope for your

success and joy, after the pleasure you have afforded us, in reciting your plans and affiliations."

"But, Mr. Jackson, do not exhibit so much abandon, surely if you will, you must become part and parcel of what, has so greatly interested yourself and yours. I would like to add the Parkvale property to 'the Prohibition', believing they two together, will make a mark in the mining world and in our bank account as well. I recalled that you named five thousand for your property. If I can procure it I will incorporate a company, embracing both the properties and operate them together as one, I believe the Jackson will prove out a good proposition. We shall have with us, the son of one of the most successful mining men in the northwest, and with him as an adjunct, his experienced and able sire in the capacity of counsel when needed. Now I am going to make you a proposition, Mr. Jackson. I have not five thousand to pay you in cash, but I will pay you two thousand cash and give you five thousand in stock of the corporation, when that stock is ready for issue, with the understanding, however, that you become a member of the directors' board, with four other good men and true."

"Well, well, my boy, you have indeed figured that out well, how long have such things been running through that fertile brain and what assurances had you, that warranted the nerve to put such a proposition up to Cyrus Jackson, the last one on earth, I think, that any of my friends would indulge in as a candidate for any like position, as Cyrus Jackson never has performed any such trick and shall he now, through assuming his inefficient dotage? Ah, my boy, what shall I say, let's call mother in to our counsel."

Mother came in with a smiling countenance, directing her glance inquiringly toward her husband, who with a broad grin, remarked: "Mother, what in the world do you suppose you are going to be called

upon to determine? Ha, ha, ha, it is really too amusing for two such bygones as you and I."

"Well, Cyrus Jackson, don't make a fool of yourself and me too, right here before our new-found friend and guest."

Wesley wearing a broad smile, exclaimed: "I will, to relieve your embarrassment, repeat in your presence the proposition I have just made to Mr. Jackson."

"Yes, yes, that's it, you can do it a mighty sight better than I can, so hustle it forth, I tell you mother," cried the old man, "it's great, a trying to make me, Cyrus Jackson, commence to do new stunts in my old age."

After Wesley had completed his recital, no word was spoken for several minutes, but it was evident that Mrs. Jackson was endeavoring to pull all ends together and note carefully the effect, before voicing her opinion. Finally she addressed her husband with, "What, Cyrus Jackson, did you call me into this for, have you lost or abandoned all the natural good sense you were once happily and abundantly endowed with? What is involved here that is so complicated and mysterious, that causes you to hesitate and call in your neighbors to assist in setting you to rights? You are not asked to become clown of some circus, or the star of some vaudeville. A proposition, simply a proposition, to join a few good men and true, to develop in a safe business way a property now of your own, which you are unable and unfitted to yourself develop and which you believe, will under the persistent and able management of this exceptional young man, prove out a success. A word to the wise should be sufficient, therefore you will now excuse me."

Wesley's proposition was quickly accepted, the papers conveying to Wesley the Parkvale property, to be promptly executed and mailed to him the fol-

lowing day. Wesley in return mailing the check therefor, with a tentative but sufficient agreement to deliver the stock involved in due time.

Wesley, now that he has possesion of both properties entirely unencumbered, proceeds with the incorporation matter, and while the attorney is preparing the papers, writes a long letter to Mr. Graham in Montana, describing in detail each and every phase of the situation, suggesting that there is plenty of room for his son Selkirk, and will be greatly pleased to have him own a tenth interest, become a director and have charge of the mines.

In due time a lengthy reply is received, which is to the effect that both the father and son are greatly pleased with the whole proposition, the elder having recalled the happenings at both these properties several years ago, also the reputation that went forth resulting from the shaft sinking operations, the letter congratulated Wesley in having secured two such good prospects, closing with, "When you need the money send along the word."

Mr. Hunt was the next object to claim Wesley's attention. After he had received the check and letter of recommend from Wesley, Mr. Hunt wrote Wesley a long letter in which he heartily expressed his gratification, at the high regard in which his brother-in-law held Wesley, adding that, should Wesley at any time need any assistance that he could supply, he had but to inform him of the fact.

Now that matters were so shaped that he could ask assistance where he could return benefits, he found it easy to make his proposition to his old friend, Mr. Hunt, thus, in accordance, he now wrote out his proposition for Mr. Hunt to become a director in his company, with four others "good and true," and could he, to equip himself for that position, subscribe for four thousand dollars of the stock, which he felt that he could guarantee would return not less

than ten percent, giving Mr. Hunt an outline of what he had accomplished in the preparation of this new enterprise, adding, that Mr. Graham's son was to become one of them.

The reply that quickly followed, gave willing assent to the proposal, adding, that any man who could handle that man Baker, as he had understood he had been handled by Wesley Hart, was a safe and fitting man to tie up with and take counsel therefrom, wishing Wesley all the success possible and advising him to "call for the money when needed," closed with a hearty invitation to come to Denver and spend the Sunday and as much more as possible with them, while Mrs. Hunt enclosed her kindest regards and hope for his success.

Thus, an object lesson here appears to the effect, that a perfect stranger can with proper conduct, acquire sincere friends while among entire strangers and such a friendship as will endure, even to the extent of loosening the pursestrings, where it must be done absolutely through the agency of confidence. It may be said, to gain this position an unlimited amount of nerve must be required, which matters not when none but honest nerve is employed. Wesley Hart knew none other, even Mr. Baker, who acknowledged defeat, confessed that Wesley had played him fair and Lawyer Simpson had admitted the same.

Wesley now had definitely located his "baby," all transactions relative to the property acquirement were complete. The papers for the incorporation and organization were also complete, except the election of officers. The subscribers to the necessary stock had met. The directors had been elected and would soon meet to elect officers; all the subscribers, however, had not to meet, as Wesley had subscribed for a large majority of the stock.

The directors chosen were Wesley Hart, Jabez

Hunt, Cyrus Jackson, Selkirk Graham and Isaac Yates, the latter the hotel man where Wesley was stopping in Pueblo, and who had been interested in the conversation, that first put Wesley on the trail of his new property acquirement.

The subscribers had signed for shares as follows: Isaac Yates, three hundred shares; Cyrus Jackson, two hundred shares; Jabez Hunt, five hundred shares; Selkirk Graham ten hundred shares; Wesley Hart, eight thousand shares. Whole number of shares ten thousand at ten dollars each. For turning over the two properties to the corporation, Wesley had taken eighty percent of the whole, transferring five hundred shares to Mr. Jackson, both to secure him as a director and to complete, the purchase price for his property as by agreement.

The company had been incorporated as "The Yankee Mining Company," which caused some witty remarks as it gradually became known, through what circumstances and methods Wesley had acquired the properties, that formed the base of the enterprise. It had leaked out one way and another, how Wesley had met and conquered the "Denver Gas and Electric Company" president, which had resulted in placing him in position to negotiate for and take over these two mines. Altogether, Wesley had created a furore of excitement and wonder in all the section aroundabout.

"A veritable Yankee," indeed, was a frequent comment. Some jeered the thought of making a success from those two old abandoned "holes in the ground," some said, he was "a young thing what orter not have left his mammy," others, that probably "his mammy don't know he is out," again it was said, "the fools are not all dead yet." "No, and never will be," remarked a wise guy, "for there is one born often enough to keep the breed agoing."

Jack Loon had already been in two fights, when

hearing this rotten stuff as he called it, and was watching out for more opportunities to defend the reputation of what he termed to be, "the only 'real man' that ever got real enough" to tackle the only good thing, that ever belonged to that rotten neighborhood, that never yet raised anything but a dog-goned coward, an' them is too plenty to make it respectable for a real man to live here, b'gosh."

Wesley and Jack together went out in search of what Jack believed to be, the best mining engineer in the district. After meeting this man it was arranged that all should visit the mine the following day, to lay out plans for the beginning of operations. First, the shafts being filled with water, must be emptied before they could be worked, then, as Wesley viewed it, "the Prohibition" being located upon a very high peak; it was a very expensive proposition as a hoisting affair, as he had made up his mind when reviewing the lay-out the first time, that a gravity proposition should be made of it, that is, a tunnel from the side of the elevation should be constructed, to intersect the bottom of that shaft and so take the dirt out by gravity.

Before arriving at the mill, Wesley discovered that the engineer was very enthusiastic, regarding the opening up of these long abandoned properties. "The Jackson," he said, "is sure to make good, spooks to the contrary notwithstanding, no trouble to get men to go into it when it is placed in proper condition to receive them," He first advised taking the water from that, as the dirt hoisted from that shaft will pay the full expense of itself and the cutting of the tunnel in the other one, until that can be utilized to take the dirt from that rich vein and he thought it would require six to eight months to drive that tunnel, then the water there would leave automatically with no expense for that, incidentally remarking, those two mines will prove the equal of

anything that has ever been opened up in this old country. I knew the engineer that laid out the 'Prohib' and he was down that shaft only a short time before they quit and said, there is an immense body of extremely rich dirt in near vicinity of that shaft, the vein rock, he said, is a good six feet wide and will shell out better than five hundred to the ton.

"Yes," broke in Jack, "an' that's a goin' some b'gosh, but the men a 'working there swear by the Lord Harry, that it will measure out more 'dough' than that 'ere story hits it."

"Well, well," exclaimed Wesley, "we won't spend our time now telling fish stories, let's not 'count our chickens' yet a while, let them get feathered first."

Now that Wesley had produced estimates of the cost to outfit the mines, he considered it proper to call the directors together to elect the officers.

Mr. Graham being so distant, he decided to wire his notice of the meeting, which he did, and the following day received the reply: "Selkirk is leaving in time to be present at the meeting," to occur three days later.

Mr. Hunt's letter in reply to the notice read that "He certainly should be present and would have mother along, as she was elated at the prospect of once again gazing upon 'that wonderful Yankee', and feeling the presence of his honest and fearless personality."

The night before the day appointed for the meeting, Wesley repaired to the station at the hour he knew the train from Denver would arrive, believing Mr. and Mrs. Hunt would come by day rather than night train and had not misjudged. As he stood upon the platform gazing at the train as it rolled into the station, a motion at one of the car windows attracted his attention, there, truly enough were the Hunts, both shaking their hands and wearing a

happy smile; soon reaching the platform a reunion as of parents and son, was witnessed by those happening to be present, Mrs. Hunt hastening to impart a parental kiss, followed by the warm embrace of the old man, here indeed, was enjoyed an experience, Wesley considered worth while living for.

Those elderly people so recently but total strangers, through what magical action had come about this sincere regard and enviable affection? Wesley was indeed completely nonplused, he had considered Mr. Hunt a good friend, as he had Mr. Graham and also Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. Hunt he had not had the opportunity to so closely and intimately meet, just an introduction with a few commonplace sentences had passed between them.

Wesley in anticipation of their coming, had secured for them nice quarters at the hotel, whither they now proceeded and soon were pleasantly conversing at the dining-room table. Wesley's "whilom maid of table service" was equal to the occasion, with the kindest solicitation for the welfare of Wesley's guests, whom he introduced to her as his foster parents, which caused a bit of merriment and satisfaction on the part of the old people. After the meal they both remarked upon the particular attentiveness shown them, by that exceedingly courteous waitress, the old gentlemen sidewinking a remark, "Hain't something doing in that direction is there, Wesley?"

"Now Jabez Hunt," quickly interposed Mrs. Hunt, "you are old enough to know better than to make such a break as that and I am ashamed of you. Wesley, don't mind all that he may so stupidly remark, I sometimes think he is arriving at his second dotage." Ha, ha, ha, roared both the men.

An exceedingly pleasant evening was passed, Wesley at their request reciting much of what had engaged his attention, since they had met at Mr. Hunt's home,

especially interesting was the experience he had with Mr. Baker of the "Gas and Electric Company." Both Mr. and Mrs. Hunt extremely enjoyed Wesley's way of relating the facts, as they had before but very scant information of what actually took place, when all had been told, Wesley seemingly had towered several knots above the position he had heretofore occupied in their estimation. It will here be recalled by the reader, that this Mr. Baker had been Mr. Hunt's principal business foe, thus naturally his defeat would be especially pleasing to him, for it cannot be supposed that Mr. Hunt was anything but human.

During the evening, Wesley asked to be excused for a few moments, soon returning with the jovial landlord, Mr. Yates, and introduced him to Mr. Hunt as a brother director in the "Yankee Mining Company," when a lively tilt occurred between them as to the sire and the name being so closely allied as to personal adaptabilities, a Yankee having always been considered by people of the south and west, as a character produced through some "queer freak" in nature, not always to be relied upon, except as to the turning of some trick.

Mr. Yates asserted that many people thereabouts, actually expected this "immaculate Yankee" would, in connection with his recent property acquirements, turn a trick well worthy of his natural affinity, adding, that he fully expected he would turn a commercial trick, for he possessed the goods to do it with, as well as the personality, and I am prepared to observe the people of Colorado learning to respect "a Yankee".

"Yes, yes," cried the old man, "we've just got to do it this time, this one has captured us all, but how has he done it, no loud hurrahs of buncombe, no exhibition of conceit, no special endeavor to worst somebody, but his honest straight-forward determined array of persistent endeavor, is his most prominent and valuable asset, and this is the weapon with which

he has conquered all with whom he had to do. Would to God there were thousands more of the same ilk."

"Amen," cried the hotel man.

It was now getting late and retirement was proposed, as Mr. Hunt suggested, "to recover physical energy to meet the pleasure of the coming day, when, I believe a circle of good and true friends will be established, through the efforts and purposes of this 'infallible Yankee.' Goodnight, my boy, goodnight."

The morning of the day of the directors' meeting had arrived and so had the directors, everyone. The meeting had been called to open at eleven o'clock; Selkirk Graham had arrived on the morning train from Denver, having ridden all night. A train arriving at ten thirty from Colorado Springs brought Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, as the lady had insisted upon accompanying her husband as persistently as had Mrs. Hunt. Thus it seemed, Wesley had in some inexplainable manner succeeded, in ingratiating his personality with the ladies quite as well as with the men, and yet, no one had ever given him the slightest reputation, as a seeker after the companionship of members of the opposite sex, in any way that could be termed "idle flirtation," when as a fact, he was wont to avoid them, unless he was accidentally thrown into their pathway.

At the meeting, of course, everybody was introduced to everybody else, and through the novel and unusual circumstances which had brought about the present assembly and purpose thereof, everybody present appeared to have taken on a jolly-go-happy spirit. As every assembly of a half dozen people is bound to have one wit present, so did this one in Mr. Yates, and the goat of the occasion was "that impressive, incomparable Yankee." Many were the sallies sent forth at his expense and to the great merriment of the others, however, sufficient decorum crept in to properly and legally elect the officers of "The Yankee Mining Company," the chief purpose of the assembly.

Wesley was chosen president and treasurer, Mr. Yates secretary, Mr. Selkirk Graham vice-president and general manager.

After the meeting adjourned, the participants also adjourned, but to the dining-room of the hotel. It is of course assumed that the meeting was held at the hotel, for as yet, the company had established no office.

A gala time that lunch hour was, the ladies of those who possessed one, were of course invited to this joyful function and no small part in the merrymaking should be credited to them, in fact, Mrs. Yates was a good second to her husband in the art of merry sarcasm. They, being the host and hostess of the occasion, had intended these business associates should for that hour, forget all business troubles, and Mrs. Jackson's comment afterwards to her husband was a very true one for all, being: "Cyrus Jackson, your mouth was just stretched from ear to ear throughout that table session and I was actually ashamed of you."

Then Cyrus retorted, "The pot must not call the kettle black, 'Manda", and "it is dangerous living in glass houses if you wish to throw stones."

"Well," was the retort, "I didn't attempt to catch all the flies they had in that hotel."

"I caught but a few, 'Manda, you didn't miss them all, did you?" Cyrus replied.

Wesley now announced that the organization now being complete and the company being ready for business, it would need some treasure for the vaults of the treasury. As we are now equipped to issue the stock, it can be done right now and if convenient a check may be given therefor, or it may be mailed after you reach home. Mr. Hunt had brought his check along, Mr. Yates drew his check and exchanged it for his certificate. Mr. Graham would wire his father for a check for his portion. Thus it was now in very truth, "The Yankee Mining Company" was an entirely equipped corporation of a hundred thousand dollars

capital, all actually and fully paid in, with fifteen thousand dollars of available working cash capital.

Wesley's "baby" was now not only discovered, but had emerged from its swaddling clothes, and now was truly prepared for a healthy and rapid growth. The owners thereof were in high glee at the prospective prospect.

The following morning, the men of the delegation inspected the properties, Wesley had arranged for the engineer to be present, that he might explain everything they had gone over on their previous trip, moreover, Jack Loon was along to help entertain, with his ideas and information so quaintly expressed. As he was to be the ground boss, all took much interest in what he had to say and predict.

The result of this inspection was eminently satisfactory to all, and especially Selkirk Graham, who was to be general superintendent.

After returning to the hotel, Selkirk excused himself as desiring to get off a long letter to his father on the evening mail, remarking that his father would be just wild over what he had seen that day and would be uneasy until he had himself seen it.

The following morning the Hunts and Jacksons proceeded towards their homes upon the same train, all, including the ladies, vowing they would be present at the first annual meeting, to congratulate that "indomitable Yankee" upon his success, or broke in Mr. Yates, "his ignominious failure." "Do not forget please," he added, "that everything in business has a possible two sides and there is rarely a sweet with no bitter to match it."

"God bless that Yankee boy," cries both Mrs. Hunt and Mrs. Jackson as of one voice. "I believe He will, I know He will," as they heartily shake hands and enter the carriage.

It was now well into December and Wesley was occasionally thinking of New England and the friends

it held so dear. Ten months was indeed a long time to absent oneself from home, surely so, when it was for the first time of any perceptible length.

Now that he had so completely effected full installment of "his baby," Wesley was anxious to return and compare notes with his "Alliance associates," wondering, as had they done concerning him, if they had succeeded better, or if they had something showing better prospects and then he wondered if they had not yet succeeded in discovering "a baby" that was satisfactory, and whether or not they had yet returned to New England.

CHAPTER V

THE SEARCHERS RETURN

The holidays in old New England, a very much respected and greatly socialized season, were now somewhat spent when from off an early evening train up at Greenville station, jumped, suit case in hand, Wesley Hart, buoyant and happy, wearing a broad smile, at what, was the conjecture of several bystanders who happened not to know or recognize Wesley. Indeed, he passed nearly across the platform before anyone recognized him, when Sydney Carter came plump up against him. They both stared for an instant, when Wesley first recovered himself and shouted: "Old Syd, old Syd, how are you old Syd, does your mother know you are out?"

"Wesley Hart, by jove, here you are. Oh my! but I am glad to see you, indeed I am, how are you old boy, how are you?"

"Fine," replied Wesley, "and yourself?"

"Just the same," was the retort, "always so so, and never any better. Where are the others, not aboard at all?"

"No," replied Wesley, "have not seen any of them since nearly ten months ago and have heard nothing from them for several weeks, didn't know but they were both in ahead of me, was going to ask, had you given me a chance. How is everybody? Haven't buried any of them, have you?"

"No," replied Sydney, "none that I think you are interested in, but you can bet they are all ready and waiting to welcome you fellows. There has been little else talked about since you left but 'those crazy boys,' and many are expecting you will return as you went, minus the money you carried away, but I already know

they'll be disappointed by the expression on your countenance."

Wesley laughed and inquired, "What would you give to know, old Syd? Well, some day the news will spread."

"But," inquired Syd, "why did you not inform us of your coming, too bad to let pass so good an opportunity and reason for a rousing reception."

"Yes," replied Wesley, "that'll come in due time and when there are three to receive, no use in waking the old town up so many times, it will become a chestnut under such tactics, let's go on up town and take a good look at all our kind friends, to see if they are all as glad to see the wanderer as you."

"Yes," retorted Syd, "had they known you were coming on that train, you would have had more company than you might desire. Before going on up to your old home just drop in to shake with the folks, father has talked about you boys almost incessantly, always ending up with, 'that's the greatest lay-out ever concocted, wonder which will turn out the best.' "

They were now at the Carter home, when Wesley suggested that Syd stay a little behind and he would stalk right in without any warning.

The first one to meet was Sybil, and she stood as a statue until finding voice to scream, Wesley Hart, where in the world did you come from and how in the world did you get here? I saw you in my dreams last night and I saw you traveling over a hill carrying a suitcase, now I behold you in very truth, suitcase as well, why, how are you and how have you been? Where are the others and what success have you had?"

"Ha, ha, ha," roared Wesley, "hold on to the binding, one at a time as often as you please, but"—here rushed in from the kitchen old lady and Mr. Carter, who at once embraced Wesley and laughed and shouted, and when Sydney came in accompanied by Uncle Amos, bedlum was by this time completely let loose.

"Well, well," ejaculated Mr. Carter, "it is so funny, Sybil related her dream of last night and here in very truth is the picture she saw, suitcase and all, by gum, she was positive it was you and could not be jostled out of it, miracle performers and dreams about them, with everything peculiar happening in these days."

Sybil had given Wesley an unusually hearty and lengthy handshake and as their eyes met, they seemed to each one as expressing a fond thought indeed; the sensation of the one moment seemed to linger after their hands were released, what could be the meaning of that peculiar feeling. Never before had either experienced such when in the presence of the other, true, they had always been good friends, but they had not known of any especial fondness for each other, in fact, they had paired off otherwise.

Soon Wesley remarked, "I must jog along as the good people up at 'the house of Hart' will likely prove as glad to shake," again holding out his hand to Sybil, and passed out into the night.

A few moments later Wesley walked in at the back door of his old home. Betty happened to be in the kitchen for something and with her back turned toward the door, Wesley strode quickly up to her and placed a hand upon her head, speaking out "Betty dear, how are you?" Turning quickly she screamed, which brought the others from the living room all in a bunch, and who shall say that quiet remained in that household for several hours to come? None could talk fast enough, none could be heard, all talked at once and nothing was said, distinguishable at least, and none knew certainly that any real information had been imparted or received. Soon as reasonable quiet could be allowed, mother at once suggested to the girls that they hustle something on to the dining table to appease hunger, adding, "One who is returning from a long trip can better appreciate that than so much hugging and gabble."

"Oh dear," shouted both girls," what selfish dunces we are," and things flew in all directions for the space of several minutes, while all tongues wagged merrily along. Finally when all had become greatly exhausted, the timely suggestion that they all retire was eagerly accepted.

The next morning the news soon had spread all over the town, that one of the "silly wanderers" had returned and curiosity led most of them to seek an interview during the day. Wesley would not leave the house that first day, he vowed it was quite good enough for him at present, but dozens of the people called, even many of those who had regarded the whole episode as but a "silly boys' folly," but curiosity will ever get the best of most of the human family from one cause or another.

Wesley made the interviews short as possible, regarding them really as intrusions, for he desired to spend that first day at home alone with his own people, but of course he could not entirely ignore them, thus his own people had not attempted to monopolize him, reasoning there will be time enough to visit and learn what there is to learn.

Mr. Hart was the most impatient of all to learn of the results of the trip, but Wesley had already told him that, by agreement, they were not to divulge their reports until after their adjourned meeting, that first, "The Alliance" must receive each detailed report, but Wesley realizing how impatient they might be, just gave them one sentence that "I have located my baby and consider it a success;" that was all that could be gotten from him, thus remaining true to his compact with his associates, even with his own good people. However, Wesley was especially cautious and yet open as far as allowable in his estimation under the solemn agreement.

The Carters and Kents were of course as much interested as were the Harts. In due course Wesley

called upon them, but could tell them nothing of the whereabouts or success of their boys, of these matters he was as ignorant as they, but they had not long to wait, for upon the evening of the third day after the arrival of Wesley, the same evening train up, dropped Basil upon the platform, and here again was cause for another uproar of surprise and greeting; however, none happened to be upon the platform upon this occasion, as it was a rainy night, so Basil strode along the street until near home, when he met Sydney going to the store on an errand.

The brothers immediately embraced each other and at once proceeded to the door of the house, when as before Sydney remained back and let Basil stroll in alone.

Mr. Carter happened to see him first and shouted to the top of his voice, "Here he is, here he is, thank the good Lord, safe and sound, and better yet with a happy countenance. You have had good luck, my boy, I know it, I know it!"

Basil was wearing a big smile and one that would not and did not come off one bit as he embraced one after another until all had enjoyed their turn. Who can know what joy can be extracted from a reunion in family ties, if one has never been absent during some lengthy period?

Soon all were seated, when question firing vigorously commenced, and so many being fired at once, it relieved Basil from responding to any, thus he haw-hawed, acclaiming, "Give us a rest, give us a rest, we need it!" and began to talk of his trip home, which went for a while, but the wolves had only been scared off temporarily and soon renewed the attack with acclaim! "Have you found 'your baby' and where is it?" Mr. Carter quietly remarking, "They will not be satisfied until you tell them all about it."

"No, we will not," exclaimed Sybil, "Wesley told us he had found 'his baby,' but would impart nothing further."

"Ah, yes," exclaimed Basil, "Wesley was loyal to his compact and I shall be to mine, no news must or can be given out until after the holding of our adjourned meeting on March first. I will say as much as he, however, I have located 'my baby' and believe I have a thoroughly good one, Wesley seemed in good spirits, did he not?"

"Indeed he did," replied Sybil, "never saw him look happier, it is truly exciting, with you boys returning so apparently happy after so long an absence, and yet so completely wrapped in mystery concerning your accomplishments, that even your nearest of kin are barred from any knowledge of your actions whatever. The ways of a boy are indeed past comprehension."

"Ha, ha, ha," shouted Basil, "but the girls all appreciate his pleasing companionship nevertheless; now, sis, can you deny it?"

"No," retorted Sybil, "I will neither affirm nor deny anything you say concerning that subject, Basil Carter, you horrid thing, so there, what have you to give that's interesting?"

Basil jumping up, made for Sybil, "this and this," as he reigned a shower of kisses upon those indignant rosy lips, "is not that interesting, my dear sister, or would it be more so from another than a brother, Jonas, perhaps," while the others were enjoying the tilt immensely.

The following morning, quite early appeared Wesley, just as the Carters were rising from the breakfast table, and to say that no embrace ever exceeded the one engaged in by these two old school chums and tentative commercial associates, would be but an idle remark, their joy at meeting once again would not down and so hilarious were they that it afforded great sport for all present, unless it be Uncle Amos, who appeared a bit bored, believing as he did, that Basil's reluctance to disclose his experiences, with their results in actual accomplishments, was a forewarning

that failure had crowned the efforts of his foolish attempt to obtain "something for little or nothing."

The boys were about to take a stroll together, when Sidney returned from an errand to the store and announced he had met Janice Kent, who had handed out the information that a letter came last night from Jonas, saying he would arrive home on New Year's eve, six-thirty, accompanied by a friend for whom he had the kindest regards and who would be his guest while at home, so here was material for another deeply mysterious mystery, and the plot thickened, while Uncle Amos, the chronic growler, was shaking his head with, "I told you so."

Things were now happening in the little old town, but now that the boys had returned, as the "prodigal of old," it seemed to inspire the thought among many of the people, that some sort of a reception plan might afford an occasion for entertainment, with these unusual characters as the guests, making a feature of the occasion an address by each one unfolding in detail, their experiences and accomplishments throughout their itinerary.

The arrival of Jonas was now but four days ahead and New Year's eve was a fitting time for the reception to receive.

Like all general entertainments of a reception character, some elements were proposed that all would not subscribe to, a community that would agree entirely would not belong to the human family, the young people desired to have dancing upon the program and many of the older ones did not object, but as usual there were some of the "holier than thou" stamp, who declared that dancing would just completely spoil the fitting solemnity of the occasion.

Everybody was busy both physically and mentally, so much so that the minority unconsciously became possessed of the spirit, each knowing it was unpopular indeed to place a straw in the way of those devoted to the cause.

The old hall must be trimmed, seemingly, as never before. Off to the woods went teams and men, while the women were clustered here and there in endeavor to acquire in plenty, every article of art and beauty that might add to the occasion.

Upon the evening of the second day, everybody, old and young, even kids who could do little more than navigate about the room, assembled to trim the large hall, and the chatter and laughter of the young people were indeed an inspiration.

Basil and Wesley were ever in the thick of it, surrounded by their former school chums, both boys and girls, as one aged person expressed it: "This scene is, I think, the most inspiring and completely satisfying scene I have ever witnessed. Here is truly and practically an example of a condition so much desired through a precept of the good book, 'Peace on earth and good will to all men,' no strife seems possible in the human world with the condition here demonstrated where all are of one accord, selfishness has no part or lot among this throng of workers. What a substitute for heaven this world might be, if the unity of spirit and endeavor to acquire happiness in the absence of human selfishness, were such as exhibited here upon this occasion."

The wee sma' hours of the morning arrived and found our joyous workers yet busy, with a will to complete the task before resting, and complete it was as the room trimming alone was concerned.

The day following the different requirements were set in place, much of the ordinary routine of business was set aside for the occasion, in fact, that old town had never before been so completely given over to the one matter in hand, even the good parson was ever present with counsel and good cheer.

The last day arrived, Jonas was expected on the six-thirty train and a delegation was to meet him at the station with brass band to escort him to the hall.

It had been arranged for carriages to convey the members of each of the boy's families, Basil and Wesley in one by themselves to head the procession, while Jonas and his friend were to ride back with them, amid the flags and bunting that were lavishly hung about the town.

Soon after six o'clock it began to look lively about the railroad station, and before the guest train arrived, there were present more than two thousand people.

The band stood out in prominence with a large American flag at its flank, and immediately upon the halting of the train, three rousing cheers filled the air and, "Home again, home again," was peeled forth by the band, accompanied by the voices of every one present who could sing at all.

The passengers were alighting, awestruck with wonder at what they beheld, who could be the important personage for whom this demonstration was given, and was he arriving or departing?

Jonas and Ellis, for it was he of whom Jonas had written as his friend, were in quite as much of a quandary as the others and they gazed about with quite as much curiosity as any, as to who and where the recipients of this demonstration were, of course innocent and ignorant that they were the whole show, or the clowns of the show, until they had reached the platform, when the station master accosted Jonas with: "This way, Mr. Kent, if you wish to avoid the crowd," leading them to the north side of the depot quickly, with remarking not a word, and where standing beside a carriage were Basil and Wesley. Both when within reach landed upon Jonas with the yell of the native Indian. Then did Ellis tumble to the game, as Jonas would have done had he been given opportunity.

The music stopped, the crowd cheered and bedlam let loose beside this racket would have appeared as docile as "the dove of peace." No time for ceremony

here, all were hustled into the carriage and forthwith they went to the town hall and the collation therewith served.

Jonas was so completely overcome upon learning that all this fuss and fucle was for him, and perhaps his "whilom Alliance Associates," that he said little and declared he knew little or nothing, while his friend Ellis was around the same mind. Great, great, was all he could articulate.

When the carriages were emptied, the guests and their relations were escorted to the selectmen's room, there to impart their greetings, each to the other of the guests and then to their relatives, after which Jonas and his friend were appraised of the plans throughout, including the recital of their experiences while away. Jonas demurred at first and for the same reason that the others had objected under, but when told it would not call for anything inconsistent with their "Alliance Compact," said he would tell them something if he could sufficiently pull himself together after this terrible circus.

The boys had no time to talk a word with each other as they would, but mingled with the crowd in their jolliest sort of way, it was everybody talking at once while shaking, with pulling and hauling.

Soon Jonas, seeing the futility of attempting to singly introduce his friend, jumped upon a chair and directed Ellis to stride another, called forth to the crowd assembled!

"My dear old chums and fellow townsmen, I have brought along with me from the wild and woolly west, one of the best of 'wild and woolly west' friends that man ever had the good fortune to acquire, he is a native of the 'Show me' state and has come along to have you show him what the people of old New England, 'the real Yankees,' are able to exhibit. The west as a rule only believes in the west. 'The real Yankees' of the east are supposed, by them, to have become not exactly

extinct, but more or less passe." Cries of no, no, went forth from the crowd, "but," continued Jonas with a laugh, my friend is willing to be shown, now with your permission and pleasure my friends, one and all, please make the acquaintance of Mr. Ellis Slayton of Joplin, Missouri."

The collation was then served and so elaborate had been the provision made, that all who desired were comfortably filled at the tables.

After the hungry stomachs were satisfied, speeches were in order and they were rattling good ones, that were cheered and then cheered some more.

Basil and Wesley had a little the advantage of Jonas, having had some notice during which to gather their thoughts upon what they might say to interest the people, but nevertheless they pulled nothing over on Jonas, for the complete surprise had seemed to quicken his wits, and his remarks, although quite different from the others, were in their way quite as interesting.

When the three allies had completed their say-so, Ellis was called up as a representative of the "wild and woolly west," to entertain the crowd, and taking his cue from what Jonas had said in introducing him, he launched out into the funniest extempore that these rural folk ever had listened to, and ere he had concluded, all within his hearing had become his friends. He had alluded to Jonas as Jonah, "the traditional Jonah," as the only inhabitant ever inhabiting a whale's belly, and was now a very different personage, since coming forth from "the Yankee whale" and roamed about the "wild and woolly paradise of America" among the bucks, that can buck all handsomely and completely and are ever and always out looking for new worlds to conquer, being especially desirous of crossing the pathway of the inevitable Yankee, who hitherto has

been regarded by the southwest as something of a freak, but more recently as one to be made note of, as they have witnessed the advent of the spewing forth of "the Yankee whale," when yells and hurrahs rent the air at the expense of Jonas Kent.

Wesley in his remarks had alluded to the "Yankee" stigma placed upon him, as emphasized by Mr. Baker of the "Gas and Electric Company of Denver," humorously repeating the characterization as given, "That damned Yankee," which brought forth loud laughter, thus when Jonas and Ellis alluded to it in their remarks, it took hold good and hard and tested a bit the old-time loyalty of the "New England Yankee," whose ancestors had come across in the traditional Mayflower.

Soon after the speeches were concluded, scores of willing hands made quick work in clearing that large hall of the collation equipment, and within thirty minutes the musicians were playing for the skip and hop, and many gray heads were to be seen among the lively throng upon the floor, while among these were to be seen the old-fashioned "cutting it down," like the clog of the clown.

The younger set were more quiet, much less demonstrative and more sentimental, usually laughing hard to see the old people hop, as with them it was "truly a hop."

Our boys and Ellis generally monopolized the Kent, Carter and Hart girls, which they could do much of the time, there being so many of them to change off with.

Betty and Bella Hart were really too much for Ellis. He could not for the life of him tell with which one he was; several times he attempted to designate them by some apparently distinctive object upon their garb, but in each case when supposing he was with one, it had proved out it was not she but the other one. Wesley could distinguish one

from the other, but Jonas and Basil were not always certain, and thus, great merriment and some embarrassment was often experienced among all the Hart girls' acquaintances of both sexes. The girls themselves so enjoyed the perplexity of others in that regard, that they did not attempt to wear anything different that they might be identified by. Ellis had to confess to himself that, in fact, there was no difference in the attractiveness of the twins, and he could not like the one better than the other; he danced several times with both and he considered both were charming and that was all the conclusion he could arrive at. When out upon the floor with one he would say: "Well, you are Miss Betty?"

"Indeed I am not," was the reply with a laugh, and again, "You are Miss Bella, are you not?"

"No, indeed, I don't sail under that color, my sister is jealous of that name, if you please sir;" thus it went, until Ellis felt ashamed to allude to a distinction without a visible difference.

Ellis mused much over the situation, should he and Jonas attempt to unravel that complexity of nature, was it not symbolic of a dual identity, not exactly a case of a "Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde," but nevertheless quite as mysterious and perplexing? Were he and Jonas intending to monopolize that precious pair, how in the world were they going to accomplish it unless the girls would co-operate, for it would be decidedly unsafe to attempt to make love to either upon one occasion, and endeavor to pick it up again at the next meeting, when if it were not the same one it would be quite embarrassing, to say the least, and furnish occasion for joking at their expense. Ellis confessed to himself that he was fond of these girls, but could not specify, therefore, why should it matter which one, and he wondered just how Jonas regarded the situation. He believed Jonas liked the girls and wished he could learn if

he had any preference, but it was a delicate subject to approach him upon and thus Ellis decided to let matters drift, and bide his time, mayhap Jonas would unconsciously commit some act that would help to solve the problem. Really, Ellis was convinced that either of the twins was satisfactory to him, he would be satisfied to settle the matter with Jonas by drawing of names from the hat, but that would not definitely settle which personality he or Jonas had obtained, unless the girls themselves would consent to co-operate, thus Ellis mused. "Would it not be a feasible and satisfactory way of adjustment to both meet the girls at the same time and explain the matter as it appears to us, to determine if possible what their preference may be in plainer and brief parley, put ourselves up at auction for them to bid upon, or refuse to bid at all?"

"Well," Ellis decided, "I will let Jonas work away at it a while, just keep around and take the one that's left whenever we go out."

An occasion was in prospect at the time, so Ellis was slow in securing his companion, while he was determined to learn if possible which one he was inviting, but when he called, both were present and neither seemed inclined to absent herself, and why should she, not knowing which he had come to see, as he had previously shown no preference so far as they had observed.

Ellis was becoming desperate and finally he inquired if Mr. Kent had been to call of late.

"Yes," replied one, "he called a few moments this morning, we were both present and greatly enjoyed the call, although it was a brief one," continuing, "have you not met him of late?"

"No," replied Ellis, "not since day before yesterday, what pray, when he called had he upon his mind?"

"Oh," was the reply, "a lot of things as he always

does, he is a cute one, Mr. Kent is, as he always was in school days and as you are undoubtedly aware, he is nice company and good in every way, sister and I both delight in his company."

"Yes," cried the other one, "he is everything that one could ask, as well as another that we both could name, but in our short lives we have learned that jewels of any sort are rare and generally come high, and like the man, who when driving about a poor lean creature, said "he should not be poor for he was fed high enough," which proved upon investigation, 'truly fitting,' as he had fed the horse so high he could not reach the feed, thus jewels that come high are forbidden sister and I, because we cannot reach them."

"I think," retorted Ellis, "that you two sisters together might devise some plan to capture a jewel so much desired, they often say that 'two heads are better than one at any old game.' Thus, two such heads as you seemingly possess should be able to find a way to acquire whatever your hearts desire. By the way, did Mr. Kent mention the church reception that occurs Thursday evening?"

"Oh yes," answered one, "much was said regarding it one way and another."

"Did he indicate that he was to be present?"

"Not decisively," replied the same one, "it seemed to depend upon something or other which he did not seem inclined to divulge."

"Suppose you are both to attend the function?" queried Ellis.

"Oh yes," replied the other, "we attend everything for something to pass the time with."

Ellis now was greatly desperate, and looking at neither especially, he blurted out the question, "Would my company be agreeable upon the occasion in question?" Each girl looked at the other but for no real cause, when the other exclaimed,

"Mr. Slayton, we would most certainly delight in your company, both of us consider your company quite agreeable and have so considered it since first we met you, but you might find yourself overloaded with a pair such as we, thus do you not think Mr. Kent will attend?"

"I did," retorted Ellis, "until you informed me that he appeared disinclined this morning."

"Oh, as for that," was the reply, he may attend even though he was not certain this morning, he can decide even after supper, put on his hat and coat and just saunter forth, why not, Mr. Slayton?"

"Yes, I presume," replied Ellis, "but I am considering you both on my list for Thursday evening and so long as I have both, the question of identity does not arise, for once my bonnie twins I am not troubled that way, but time, the just and certain regulator, will ever straighten out the crooked and place each parcel on its true and proper pedestal, thus you and I will finally arrive at our proper designation, with the proper associate whichever of two it may concern."

The girls were much pleased at this and one exclaimed: "I did not before realize, Mr. Slayton, that you were so great and accurate a philosopher, for you have correctly drawn a picture that I think comes directly home to us three or four in very fact."

"But," cried Ellis, "where does the four come in, surely we are but three."

With a blush the maiden retorted, "the other is perhaps in imagination, 'a wish may have been father to the thought,' that sometimes happens you know," and all were merry with laughter as Ellis arose to go.

The following morning Ellis met Jonas with a laugh, they had not met for two days as Ellis had been to the city and Jonas had been out in the country with his father, so they had by happen just missed each other.

Ellis at once put the question, "How about Thursday evening, Jonas, anything doing?"

"No," replied Jonas, "nothing doing here, why, what are you driving at?"

"Oh, nothing in particular, but supposed you would attend that function, as you seldom allow an opportunity to escort Miss Hart pass you by."

"Miss Hart," retorted Jonas, "which Miss Hart?"

"Search me, cried Ellis, "perhaps you can tell better than I, surely they are too much for me, that precious pair."

"Precious all right," replied Jonas, "I called there this morning to invite one of them to go along."

"Which one?" cried Ellis.

"Search me now, for I'll be blamed if I could get an even chance at either of them, they stuck together like two leeches and I hadn't intended to invite the whole family, thus it disconcerted me and I invited nothing."

"Ha, ha, ha," roared Ellis, "that's some confession anyhow for such as 'Jonas Kent' to make, I'll be fully bound if that's not interesting."

"But how about Ellis Slayton," cried Jonas, "is he able to do much better, what provision have you made for the function in question?"

"Ah, my good chum," replied Ellis, "I am going to that reception and I have an abundance of good company, really some to spare, were a good friend in need and a change in venue were agreeable to the present subject matter, with a possible change in relative associations."

"Thou talkest in riddles, my good Ellis," cried Jonas, "pray tell what thou would'st have me understand."

"Ah, old boy," retorted Ellis, "I bagged the game that a lack of courage prevented you from bagging, only this, I secured the whole brood where you only went after one."

"The deuce you did," cried Jonas, "you are to carry off that precious pair of twins, my land alive, what in the world are you to do with them, well loaded this time, old boy, if asked which you prefer what can you say and be honest with yourself?"

"I cannot answer such a question and I wager that neither can you."

Jonas laughed and confessed his inability to select and if selecting, "how can one be certain that upon any occasion he has the right one? Were a fellow to marry either, how can he be certain the one apparent is the real wife?"

"Well, do as I have done and take 'em both," replied Ellis. "Now I am to make a suggestion. You have confessed that you really have no choice and that is my position in the matter exactly, let's take two slips, write one of their names upon each slip, deposit them in a hat, you draw first, which shall be considered by us as bona fide, the one remaining in the hat shall be mine, this, so far as we are concerned, I will take them both to the reception and when you appear we will manage to get you hitched on to one of them. When arriving at their home we will go in, and all being seated together, we will in some way manage to have them speak their names, and then put the proposition straight up to them of so adjusting some part of their raiment that we can always easily identify them. We are equal to that I believe, then we can be governed by what takes place, as to propounding any further questions; we are both certain we are in love with both of them. Being unable to discover any preference we can go upon the decision the slips have adjudged, until we find they have other ideas; the situation I think allows of a double header in 'a proposal of marriage,' a unique and unusual method I will admit, but so has been our intercourse with these precious twins."

"Well," replied Jonas, "you have figured that out

in unique style all right. I am not averse to any method of ascertaining where we are at, that is honorable and will set us aright."

Thursday evening at the church reception and supper, Ellis and the twins appeared, and in due course Jonas walked in, and after sauntering about a while, apparently accidental, he met his friend and whilom associates, all of whom appeared heartily glad to meet him. Soon supper was announced and how otherwise, than that Jonas should gallantly propose to relieve his friend of part of his company; thus now paired off, they remained paired off until they all went for their wrappings, which was which, neither of the boys knew, but as the girls came in from the dressing room, Jonas stepped up to the first one, which afterward proved was the one Ellis had escorted to supper, the girls of course knew of the mistake, but it was so common a one they simply smiled and passed on, little dreaming of what their escorts had in store for them.

Arriving at the door, although a little late, the invitation to "come in" was accepted and somewhat to the surprise of the girls, no doubt, soon after becoming seated, the sisters on the sofa with the boys just in front of them in chairs, Ellis remarked, "My dear young ladies, we, my friend and myself, surely have passed many happy hours in your delightful society and our fondness for you has whetted our desire to be able to more easily identify you, a problem we have been unable to solve, as have all other of your acquaintances. We feel that you should, in reciprocation of the fond regard and affection in which we so dearly hold you, so adjust some part of your raiment that we may know 'who is who'; to others if you wish, you can remain incognito."

The reply from one was: "We, sister and I, both are fond of the company of both Mr. Slayton and Mr. Kent, we regard you highly and would not offend you in any way for the world, moreover, we will be pleased

to adopt any suggestion that you may make if practical and reasonable. We confess to having greatly enjoyed the perplexity of others regarding our identity, suppose it is naturally but human to be pleased at the discomfiture in others, when innocently and harmlessly brought about, and we claim to be nothing but human."

Then Jonas remarked, "We desire to continue with you girls, as the best and most sincere friends possible."

"Aye, more than that," added Ellis, "we desire to become more than friends in the normal sense; my dear ladies, will it be presuming too much to inquire in behalf of Mr. Kent and myself, if we are sufficiently agreeable and worthy in your estimation, to be considered by you as proper and satisfactory to hold a relationship much stronger and dearer than any degree of friendship? In briefer and more definite parley, can you and will you consider a reciprocation of the love we both experience for you both? We confess to our inability to distinguish between you as a preference, therefore which name you bear matters not."

Noticing the girls were much confused at what he had said and appeared unable to reply, Ellis pleasantly inquired if what he had said had in any degree offended them.

"No, indeed," replied one, "the question I was debating was whether or no you sufficiently understand yourselves, the point you have raised is of most serious import, one in which one's understanding of oneself cannot be too acute, to understand oneself I regard as quite as important as to clearly understand another."

"I wish to say," added the other, "in behalf of my sister and myself, that we consider the honor you are proposing to bestow upon us the greatest and most to be desired of any that can be conceded to any member of our sex by any member of yours. Truly our esteem and regard for you both is practically unlimited, but"—here they all burst out in a hearty laugh, with the same thought in all their minds, "The query

is, which is to be which and how are you going to work it out?" For several minutes they sat and enjoyed the ludicrous situation; to be sure, the boys had not really "popped the question" and the ridiculousness of the situation made it impossible to intelligently commit the act. Both sides now appeared to have gone the limit, what should be done next, but it rather seemed to be the boys' next move, the girls could not with propriety proceed further, the predicament they all found themselves in was embarrassing, to say the least. Then Jonas, becoming a bit desperate, arose to the occasion with the question, "My dear ladies, if either or both of you have any preference between us will you be so kind as to name it? Truly we must act in some way, else sit here and grin at each other for nobody knows how long and none can tell with what result."

The girls looked at each other and shouted together with a loud laugh, "No, no, we have no preference, we like you both equally well."

Jonas suggested that Ellis inform the girls of the plan he had suggested to him in solution of the difficult problem.

Ellis laughed and remarked, "You would make of me the laughing stock of the assembly, would you not? Perhaps in this case it is not an enviable position to be placed in."

"Yes, yes," cried the girls, "go ahead, let's have it."

"Well," retorted Ellis, "prepare for the worst and regard as lightly as possible the offense it may commit, promise me that you will and I will proceed with a recital of that weird and abnormal proposal of adjustment, concerning the like of which, never before was known or heard of, in the heavens above or the earth beneath."

When the plan had been unfolded, the girls were convulsed with laughter, and having somewhat of the

gamble tendency, declared it was a fine way out of the difficulty, "Jolly, just jolly," said one.

"But who shall do the drawing?" cried Ellis. "I propose the girls do it for it should be they to determine their choosing, it being a traditional idea that 'man shall propose and woman dispose,' in this case the one drawing the slips disposes."

"Are you willing, Mr. Slayton, to be disposed of by lottery?" inquired one of the girls.

"Yes," replied Ellis, "when the cards are all Harts."

"Me, too," cried Jonas.

"Well sister, what's to be done with such a precious pair of boys as that, we are in for it I guess, shall we do it?"

"It's a funny way," replied the other, "but how else are we to accomplish anything? I would prefer they do the drawing, but suppose their argument is the logical one and thus we should conform to it, now then put your names upon a slip and pass the hat to all the women, with the injunction to take but one."

The other one leaned across and whispered to her sister, and immediately she spoke up as being dissatisfied with the plan to have the ladies do the drawing and insisting upon the boys doing it, thus one of the girls wrote both their names and placed them in the hat, exclaiming, "Now that is the method you boys first decided to adopt and it should be the one employed."

"Very well," replied Ellis, "take your pick Jonas, and I'll take what is left."

All were on the broad grin as Jonas drew forth one of the slips, but did not look at it until Ellis had taken his, when they held them up with the names toward the girls, when they roared and roared while the boys looked queer. Soon all were bursting with roaring laughter and the boys now realized how they had been again duped, for which one had they drawn, true, they each had a name, but "what's in a name?"

They always had known the names of those "incorrigible twins," but they now, more than ever, desired to know the distinctive personality.

Greatly chagrined were the boys upon discovering the complete failure of their solution, really, they had been caught in a trap of their own provising and their pride objected to begging quarter from the girls, while their countenances wore a perplexed and dissatisfied look, and the girls were just bulging over with fun that the situation had provided them.

It was now past midnight and one of the girls suggested that it might require another session to complete the deal, which had really resolved itself into "The gamble of mystery," thus the boys were compelled to leave unsatisfied their curiosity as to which of the two girls were to be his in very fact, while the girls remained fully informed regarding the decree of fate, truly, a one-sided and unjust dispensation, but as woman has ever been conceded by a kindly fate the most favored position, there seemed to be no relief present for the boys.

The quartet could not meet the following evening, as the old people of the neighborhood were to be entertained by the older members of the Hart family, therefore, the girls would be busy in assisting. The following day was Saturday, when calls were not considered just proper.

The following day being Sunday, the girls had reminded the boys that gambling could not be considered upon that day or evening, Monday evening was a party at the Carters and no session could be held after the time that would adjourn, thus it was that each of the boys would be obliged to endure his torment until Tuesday night, at the least, meeting the girls at these several functions and also Sunday at church, knowing that one of them was to be his wife, but not knowing which one and all the time knowing that each girl was certain of her fate, it really was but cruel torture and

who could describe the situation otherwise? But Ellis reasoned that good things come high, even if the coin in payment was less objectionable, a "hope deferred" being much better than a "forlorn hope," thank the good Lord.

The quartet did not meet again until at church on Sunday, and then only for a salute and shake of the hand. Sunday evening they were all out and the boys accompanied the twins home, but was each boy with his own girl neither boy could tell and neither could they detect a clue upon which to base an opinion, dark, all was dark as the night that enshrouded them, but nevertheless it was a gay quartet.

At home they were invited in, remaining the usual time of such occasions, but any attempt at the game of identity was quickly diverted by the girls.

Two rather cheap feeling fellows were they, Ellis and Jonas, yet they had much cause for rejoicing, for they had succeeded in their attempt to secure to themselves that which was entirely satisfactory, nobody had anything over on them, their sorrows were few, their joys many and complete.

At the Carter party all of the quartet were present and throughout, the same tactics, "mum is the word," prevailed regarding the identity of the twins, but Ellis and Jonas set their teeth down hard with each other in the resolve, that forty-eight hours more should not pass before those "implacable twins" should deliver up their identity. Of course the boys accompanied the twins home as usual, in complete ignorance of which one they were with. The girls appeared to the boys as much more hilarious than had been their wont, and well they might be, thought the boys, after putting it over on us in this fashion, they are enjoying "the time of their life" at our expense before they are justified in so doing. After musing thus, it occurred to the boys, who were generally disposed to be exceptionally fair in all matters, that the apparently greater joy

demonstrated by the girls, was not due to the apparent crusade they were putting over on them, but might be due to the natural conditions present between them, "an engagement" generally being considered second only "to marriage" in the important pleasing events of a life. With these reactionary thoughts presenting themselves, the boys felt better and more charitable concerning what they had almost considered abusive treatment.

They did not call upon the twins the next night after the Carter party, desiring to appear not over-anxious, but the second night they decided to have that identification session come off, thus in due time appeared at the door of the Hart home. Mrs. Hart answered the bell and seated them in the parlor with the remark, "The girls are upstairs, I will quickly advise them of your presence." In a few moments one of the twins appeared delighted as ever to meet them. "Sister will be down presently," remarked the maid, "we hardly had expected you yet a while, so much has been going on of late, thought perhaps you might have tired somewhat of society."

"That might depend," suggested Jonas.

"Upon what?" inquired the maid.

"Upon whose ox is being gored and upon who might be goring it," retorted Jonas.

"Ah," cried the maid, "in riddles thou art speaking to one so dense, dost thou then imagine that it's mystery I am courting, that whatever of mystery appears upon the surface is quite disconcerting and thus, might cause rupture that no healing balm could cure?"

"Ha, ha, ha, my pretty maid," cried Ellis, "dost thou not realize thou hast spoken truly of the feelings and experiences recently endured by the guests now present, is it in true sympathy that thou has confessed the belief, that in mystery a possible danger lurks, is there anything in human affairs that more closely needs guarding, than happiness full and com-

plete while restricted by the handicap of mystery? If such then be thy confession, rapidly unfold the mystery of thine own identity. Truly thou and thy sister have reached the limit and two anxious swains await with impatience, that which is theirs by all moral and natural right, thus, have thee and thy sister the right to desire even, to withhold further the betrothal embrace and kiss, through the withholding of thine identity?"

From behind the portiere came an uncontrollable snicker and at once appeared the other twin, "which one, of course", who had by her own confession listened to the full dialogue, between her sister and the callers and the boys were glad that she had. Now, the matter uppermost in their minds was brought irrevocably before the meeting, nothing but a rank refusal could now prevent the consummation of the present tentative engagement, while that was what the boys had come for and were determined to have.

It cannot be said that the girls objected in the least, but the natural propensity of a young maiden to flirt a bit, or hector with her male associates, belonged to these twin damsels through an inherent right passed down from all the ages, thus, it is accepted and condoned by each and every generation as time produces them, in moral parley, however, only innocent flirtation can be considered.

Ellis and Jonas each took occasion to pass their eyes carefully and searchingly over the entire forms of both the maidens, to detect if possible a distinguishing mark, but failed to note any distinction in their raiment or personal appearance, apparently nothing had been attempted in that line, while they had expected the girls would effect some visible signs.

Since the coming of the other twin, conversation had been diverted to general subjects concerning recent happenings; all were heartily in accord with merrymaking and a dull moment was not allowed to

creep in, when all too soon it occurred to the boys that it was getting late and the object of that session must be put over soon, if at all, on that occasion.

"Beg pardon, my dear ladies," said Ellis, "but as it is growing late, may I call the attention of the meeting to the principal article in the warrant, the real subject for which this session was appointed, i. e., to establish a convenient method for identifying or distinguishing between two parts of a wonderful work of nature? I think it safe to remark that never before has nature so completely baffled the discerning powers of man as in your case. We, Mr. Kent and myself, had expected you would favor us upon this occasion with some visible distinction in make-up and have searched but in vain for the evidence desired."

The girls both laughed, when one exclaimed, "and you really haven't discovered any identification sign, how dense you are, for surely the sign is out?"

"Yes," retorted Jonas, "so are the stars out, but we do not know the name of any certain one, as in this case, so the maids are out but who is the wiser as to who is who?"

"Well," spoke up one of them, "I am Bella and of course sister is Betty, and now you have it, so simple after all this anxious and torturous waiting."

"Yes by jove," cried Jonas, "and we will have it right quick, before any mix up can occur to again make uncertainty of a certainty." With action quickly succeeding his words, he jumped across the space between them and grabbing Bella around the waist, gave and received the betrothal kiss with compound interest, while Ellis had not waited to discover how they did it, but had taken up the affair with Betty in his own good way with equally good results, thus we will leave them to devise a permanent way of identification for use by them hereafter.

While all this trouble of uncertain identity has been in process of adjustment, the people of the neigh-

borhood have not been blind to all that has been occupying the thoughts of this worthy quartet.

Basil and Wesley had known for some time, that the twins were not to be left out in the cold, perishing in single blessedness, the signs were plenty as to that, but they could not narrow the situation down to the who is who phase of it and the one did not live that could, except the twins themselves, and they not until after the die had been cast by the lottery drawing.

When it became known to Basil and Wesley of how the pairs had been made up, the greatest katow ever was hilariously celebrated. The parents of all concerned considered it the most wonderful of all wonders, that such an apparently absurd process could ever be brought to pass, with what was apparently bound to prove eminently and satisfactorily the proper thing. That it was a case of the most sincere and deepest love upon both sides, there was no question among all who knew the parties. That there was no preference in choice upon either side was the most mysterious part of the affair, yet no one expressed a doubt that all parties to the contract had been true to their convictions, and many years after the same convictions obtained, with never a jar or a diminishing in the degree or quality of the love, visibly present between them as finally paired off.

It was now late in February, with only a few days remaining before the date for the holding of the adjourned "Alliance" meeting. None of the boys had since returning divulged anything concerning their operations while away, except to admit, each one, that he had found "his baby" and considered it satisfactory.

The time had rapidly passed since arriving home, with the real matter in hand not now "searching for babies," but in the quite as important matter of securing a life companion. Before leaving for home the "Alliance Boys" knew their fate in that respect, was

safe in the community of old Greenville, the girl companions of their school days they well knew furnished abundant good timber, from which to select a satisfactory wife, and perhaps believed that she had already been selected as has before been intimated. But as the reader recalls the lay-out as then made up, it is now discovered that in neither case was the previous pairing off adhered to in the final make-up, proving, of course, that school-day impressions are seldom reliable when taking into view, practical considerations as viewed by more mature judgment.

Basil Carter and Janice Kent had no sort of filial feeling toward each other during school days, for her, it had been Wesley Hart and none other had seemed to interest, however, since the return of the boys her intuitive preference had materially changed, moreover, Basil had always, as a school boy, considered Betty Hart as the ideal, but everyone knew and he also believed that it was not always Betty that had captivated him, as sometimes it was Bella with whom he had unexpectedly found himself, however, they were more distinguishable in school days than later. Soon after school days, generally, a more apparent change in sentiment is evident than before or later, thus the materially different effect these young people had upon each other upon the return of the boys, from that enjoyed before they departed, can be easily accounted for. As the reader recalls, as almost instantly upon the meeting of Wesley and Sybil Carter, they discovered much in common not before realized, the first pressure of the hands spoke volumes and thus it is that cupid is wont to fire his darts unexpectedly, mysteriously, even. While now supposedly his duties are complete with our double quartet, all concerned now believe he has in each case perfected "a happy alliance," and satisfaction reigns supreme.

At the meeting of "Triple Alliance" on March first 18— under the old oak tree in the pasture lot behind

the barn, Basil promptly opened up his report in detail. Of course the reader already has it, but it is unfolded greatly to the astonishment of both Jonas and Wesley. Each had considered he had the "best baby" and now—well—some babies are more attractive upon the surface than are others. Why not possible a difference between these "alliance babies," none could at present divine what might creep into the life of the most promising of these "commercial babies," however brighter appearing at birth, what may already have been decreed for the child to dim its brightness, to handicap its usefulness, to restrict its contribution to "The Triple Alliance?"

When Basil had recited his account throughout and rested, Jonas remarked: "Well, by jove, Basil, you are full owner, practically of a real railroad and so soon, it certainly is miraculous, that in less than a year you have accomplished so much, I am proud to have you as an ally, and I now feel the insignificance of my position as your associate. I cannot at this time make any such a showing; I have believed that I have as nice, robust and productive a 'Baby,' as either of you could describe, but shall have to confess that at the starting point the brilliance of mine will become overcast by yours in comparison, the final and permanent results, however, in comparison I will not attempt to recount."

"Well," said Basil, "recount what you may have to recount, there is no one present to criticise or complain."

Jonas then proceeded as Basil had done, omitting nothing that the reader is already familiar with, adding some essential features that had come to him in reports from the old man he had left in charge, regarding an option he had taken upon a large herd of stock, which would hold good until he returned; also a proposition for purchase of his ranch from the Chicago parties, who it will be recalled owned property

separated from the river by his ranch, had also been referred to in the old man's communications in a deprecating manner. It now appeared that they had endeavored to secure the property from the old man some time before, but business relations between them had resulted in considerable friction, thus nothing could be accomplished and the old man had hinted at this before selling. These people had by letter endeavored to interest Jonas in a corporation, to be formed to embrace the ownership of their two ranches and that of his own, but Jonas had not taken kindly to their proposition and for several reasons, first, they were entire strangers to him, and being two to one, he considered he might not always receive fair play, moreover, it would mean that only one-third of the profits could be applied toward the support of the "Triple Alliance," therefore, in all probability he could not keep his end up in that direction, anywhere in accord with his "alliance associates," thus reasoning that it might be much more to his advantage to sell and relocate, provided a satisfactory price could be obtained.

Jonas believed he was greatly in the way of his neighbors and when they learned that he was to fence in his ranch, he believed they would be willing to accord him a goodly sum, to just step out of their way and so give them full access to the river front, without trespassing upon another. But these calculations were simply prospective and thus were not germain to the purpose of this meeting, actualities rather than prospects were to be made, according to the compact between the boys.

Wesley and Basil had been much interested in the report of Jonas, because it seemed to them to savor in a very unusual degree, of persistency and faith as demonstrated by Jonas, regarding the possibilities in the earning power of his "agricultural baby," for it is proper to state that neither could imagine that a baby

of this class, could by any possibility be so conditioned as to possess the ability, to contribute so greatly to the support of "The Triple Alliance," as either of the others. Although Jonas had listened to the flattering report of Basil concerning his railroad proposition, it can be said in very truth that Jonas possessed no less enthusiasm and no more regrets, concerning his selection of agriculture as a "commercial baby," than before he had listened to Basil's report; Jonas possessed a staunch and steady character, his personality was one of strength not easily diverted or discouraged, the other boys realized this and respected his ability, to cope with anything of an adverse nature and none would now be against his success in favor of theirs, because of these staying qualities.

It was Wesley's turn now to interest the meeting and both the others, were quite curious about what could be said of a "hole in the ground," truly, many things have holes in the ground, not the least is perhaps the traditional "ground hog," whose lordship contributes so greatly in aid of "the weather man's" predictions, concerning the closing of winter and the opening of spring, but Wesley's "hole in the ground" might be a "hole in the ground," or only a place to put one, who could tell? Supposedly a long time is required to construct, a properly commercial workable excavation deep below the surface, where nature provided man should labor for its treasure.

Wesley recounted his experiences and the results therefrom with more or less of humorous abandon, for he was perhaps the jolliest make-up of the three and had extracted much fun from his experiences. After Wesley had recited to the meeting what has already been recited to the reader, the other boys cried out, "Bravo, bravo, so much for a 'hole in the ground,' a 'baby with a hole descending to millions,' who can tell what joy shall come forth from a hole, simply a hole, that so greatly enjoys the enmity of the investing

public? 'A hole in the ground' where millions have supposedly been poured and where none have ever returned to satisfy the donor thereof, the almost universally 'black listed investment,' a complete 'hoodoo,' and here one of our enterprising hopefuls has staked his life prospects." What verdict but one can the public safely pronounce upon one so rash? "A fool and his money soon part company," is all the comfort that could come Wesley's way, through an everwise and unsympathetic public.

These unusual boys had known from the start that many unfavorable comments had been passed, upon their determination to be original, to work out their own destiny in a way of their own devising; in so doing, others had not been considered by them and should a day of sad reckoning come to pass, others should not be invited to co-operate in the sad rites of mourning.

The boys arose and heartily shook each other's hands, when Basil cried out, "Honors are even, by jove, and I fully believe they will remain so, I fail to discover when all conditions present and prospective are duly considered, where either of these 'interesting babies' have anything on either of the others and my belief is truly, that when five years shall have passed, each will be equally well able to contribute to the support of 'The Triple Alliance.' "

The boys had desired to have copies of their reports made for reference and to show to their immediate friends and relatives. Ellis having made himself proficient in shorthand had been invited to be present and take the full reports as the boys made them, which was a proper proceeding and afforded much pleasure to the parents of the boys, increasing their confidence in their ability to fully make good, also increasing their desire to assist them to the extent of their ability should they fall in need.

Basil, especially, needed no further assistance, he had further advanced the financial end of "his baby"

than had the others, but the others had, and Wesley in particular, fallen heir to greater profit from speculation. The result of Jonas's endeavor in that direction, however, had not yet fully materialized, but all could see that conditions were propitious upon his return to the west.

Ellis had been thoroughly interested in all that had been reported and often had broken in with, "Great, great, the greatest ever," wishing he also might have had a shake in with such boys as those, and predicting very unusual careers for all of the "Alliance Members," he vowed that the whole proceeding from its inception is most extraordinary and original, to the last end of the last ditch and is fully worthy of the attention of the most eminent financiers, no man or body of men have ever carried off bigger game, even from a more elaborately constructed or more lengthy attempt," adding, that "it will be impossible to declare or predict which, as they now stand, may surpass the other and I believe it will prove out, 'honors are even.' "

Basil now suggested that they proceed to incorporate and organize, "The Triple Alliance" as contemplated a year ago. Remarks pro and con were offered concerning which state to incorporate under, where should be the headquarters, how shall those headquarters and by whom be managed, thus after a time it developed that the central point, when considering the location of the different enterprises, would be "Saint Louis." As they were to hold all "Alliance Meetings" at this office the convenience of it was to locate there, and the location being settled, it became easy to settle upon the one to have it in charge.

It will be recalled that Ellis had inherited a good business in Saint Louis from an uncle and that was to be his permanent home, thus, it had come to pass that "A man for the place was discovered, simultaneously with a place for the man," so here was another complex complexity in alliances, and following very close upon

the adjustment of the twin perplexity. Altogether speaking, it might prove another perplexity to attempt a diagnosis of the relationship, socially and commercially, now existing between these double quartets, but we will wait a bit before attempting that, for the bonds of relationship are not yet fully complete. The reader may wonder how a more complicated line-up can be expected, what other possible alliance can be brought about, but we shall see, about what we shall see.

The papers for incorporation were duly executed and forwarded to the "honorable secretary of state," when after a few days the "Triple Alliance" had begun to live in very truth. A meeting of incorporators was held and directors elected, after which the directors met and chose the officers who were, for president, Basil Carter; for vice-president, Jonas Kent; treasurer, Wesley Hart; and as the secretary was not necessarily a stock holder, Ellis Slayton was made secretary and manager of the office affairs at Saint Louis.

Now that business matters were completed, the boys began to take themselves off for their stamping grounds, deciding to leave as before, all together, on the twentieth day of March, only there were now four instead of three to go.

During the time the boys had been home they had kept in close touch with the operations at their respective camps and had been satisfied at the way their lieutenants had hustled matters along.

At Basil's proposition all work had progressed well, but the time limit would be overreached before completion, the winter had been severe and a labor strike had seriously interfered with expected results, so that now completion could not be expected without consuming an extra month.

Wesley's "baby" had made headway quite up to expectations. Here there was really no definite time allotted for any certain amount of work, at the "Jack-

son" it was production from the start, as they were all ready to take out ore in the shaft but in a limited degree, however, until they were at bottom, but he had learned that the equipment had all been placed, and also the full equipment for tunnel cutting at "The Prohib" was in working order. Seemingly, Wesley was nearer to standard production than any of the others.

Jonas could not be expected to realize from production within a year and not greatly for two years, unless it be through speculation. He had some business figuring yet to work out before getting into the running regularly, in fact, he expected to need more funds to equip his ranch with a necessary amount of stock, he had several plans in mind and was not quite settled which to adopt, he knew he needed "ten thousand dollars" at once to invest in young stock, he believed his father would furnish "two thousand" of this should he ask him, but as the others had needed not to go back for more, his pride offered objection to his going back.

Ellis one day broached the subject of financing his stock deal, saying he had a few thousand that came from his mother's estate, that was only drawing a small interest in bank and he was welcome to use it if he cared to.

Jonas replied that he might later avail himself of his kindness, but could not decide just what to do until he had returned and looked the affairs over, if he took up the option the old man had written about, it might come in quite handily. "How would you consider a proposition," asked Jonas, "to place it in stock of a corporation, capitalized at say one hundred thousand."

"First class," replied Ellis, "that would be eminently satisfactory to me. The business I am to take up is already well capitalized and thus, shall not need anything I have on hand for that."

Mr. and Mrs. Kent desired to entertain the young

set before the boys departed and a day was appointed for that function, and as the three families were now through prospective marriages so closely allied, the families of each of "the Alliance" members were also invited, altogether assuring a numerous attendance.

CHAPTER VI

JONAS SCORES

At first it had seemed to the girls that they were to be dragged almost out of the world, and so far distant from each other and their parents, that it would seem as being dead each to the other, but when it had been explained that once a year they would meet, when the men repaired to the office of "The Triple Alliance" to round up the year's transactions, it greatly modified the dread. Moreover, they were told that it was theirs to visit each other as often as they desired. A full day's ride would bring them from one to another upon a journey to take them all in. Then it did not seem to them so drearisome, but they would be far away from their parents, and this not so easy to overcome, but they had been assured the privilege of a visit home once a year and the parents could visit them as often. Of course this was an unusual case, a wholesale taking off, as it were, of a set of girls brought up together and who had always been almost as sisters in their intercourse with each other.

The community had looked upon the case with much curiosity, really, with wonderment at the way matters had worked out, and would continue interested in them after they had become settled in their faraway home. Truly, these enterprising boys were certain to be kept in mind. The feeling had now departed from everybody that they would fail to make good, they had already passed the dead line in the estimation of all who knew them, for their daring operations thus far had established their ability, to handle successfully anything they should undertake, thus, it was a question no longer, "Will they make good," but "How good will they make it?"

Upon the morning of departure the houses of Hart,

Kent and Carter, were early astir and had needed no alarm clock to prompt them, although weeks had passed as chumming and visiting had galloped briskly along. It seemed now, as being greatly behind the schedule it had started in with, much more was to be said yet awhile, however, if only the dutious old clock would but slacken its swiftly monotonous pace a bit, but alas, how could it be so merciless toward these tenderly loving hearts?

Ellis now seemed to them all as but a son and brother, there was really no difference apparent, in the solicitude of those parents for his welfare than for the welfare of the others, and many others than the relatives of the departing ones were present as the train rolled off.

The boys continued on together until reaching Philadelphia, where they all spent the first night together, and the following morning all but Basil continued on together until reaching Saint Louis. Here they spent a couple of days looking about and visiting the business quarters, that Ellis had recently inherited from his uncle and which he was about to take possession of. Arrangements were completed regarding the office of "The Triple Alliance," there would be little to do the first year, in fact, all knew there would be no contribution to the treasury before the end of the following year, and then perhaps not much.

Wesley was the first to depart. They could journey together no further, for Wesley was to take a northern direction for Kansas City, that being almost in due lie to Pueblo, the headquarters for his stamping ground. Jonas and Ellis would continue until reaching Joplin, Ellis's old home.

The following morning after Wesley left they also took their departure, as Jonas was anxious to get to his place, the option on the stock would expire in a few days and he desired a little time to acclimate himself to conditions that might environ his interests.

Jonas and Ellis when upon the train that day, had abundant time to talk over and arrange anything necessary to the organization of a company, should it be found advisable to work the business by that method, but Jonas did not wish to make definite arrangements until he had pulled things together. However, they had arranged it so Jonas could rely upon "ten thousand dollars," should he decide to take up that option.

The following morning after arriving at Ellis's home, Jonas took leave of Ellis with the understanding that they should meet again before Ellis located in Saint Louis. Ellis's present home being about half way between the stamping ground of Jonas and Saint Louis, they would not be so far apart that frequent visits might not be enjoyed.

Arriving at Fort Worth that same evening, Jonas picked up a paper and soon read of the suicide of a ranchman, in a town about twenty-five miles south of Forth Worth, but not considering the matter of special interest to him soon thought no more of it.

The next morning quite early, he started for his ranch and upon reaching it, the old man he had left in charge engaged him in a long conversation, that soon created in Jonas an interest in the item he had noticed the night before, the old man being especially conversant with the situation surrounding the suicide, who had leased the ranch he was living upon for a good many years, almost considering it as his own, so long had he been there. The real owner of it had recently died and the son succeeding had no use for a ranch in any capacity, therefore had served notice on the ranchman to quit the folowing fall. Old Man Hardy had inside information that the young owner was going to sell it, further, upon that information the old man had obtained a refusal or first chance, whenever the time came to sell and a price had been settled upon.

The suicide had the ranch not largely stocked, in fact, a very small stock considering the size, which

was "fifteen thousand acres" and located upon the same river as Jonas's present ranch. All this had developed in the conversation when Jonas inquired, "What in the world the old man wanted that ranch for, when he had recently sold one to be rid of the burden of it." The old man had taken this precautionary measure in Jonas's interests, as he said, thinking he might have some good friend who could make good use of it.

The old gentleman's name, of whom Jonas had bought his ranch, was Jasper Hardy, and Jonas already had good reason to believe him an exceptionally nice old gentleman, he having taken much more than a usual interest in Jonas and his affairs. Conversation soon turned to the option the old man had taken upon a large number of cattle and sheep. This offering had come about through necessity of the owner, who was being pressed by his creditors, but by selling this herd he could settle and save some other property.

Jonas and Mr. Hardy decided to look the herd over the following day, when Mr. Hardy advised Jonas to secure the herd, while Jonas so far as his judgment would dictate, considered it at least a safe deal. After figuring a while, the prices were up to "twelve thousand dollars" but the old man said he considered the herd as it stood easily worth "fifteen thousand"; the owner he said had told him the year before that it was easily worth "eighteen thousand," but it was a case of necessity, the sum named for the herd was worth more to him right now than much more would be later. When the sacrifice had been made, Jonas had the price, as before stated, the father of each of the boys had donated another "two thousand" as they came away, and this, with Ellis's loan, would pay for the stock. Eighty per cent of the herd were cows and young stock, three-quarters of the sheep were ewes and lambs, the cattle kind altogether numbered a thousand, the sheep kind about fifteen hundred. The trade

was consummated within the week and the stock located upon "Jonas Kent's ranch." The proportion of cattle to sheep was about the same as that of the herd he had bought of Mr. Hardy. Thus, now he had about twelve hundred of cattle kind, and of sheep about eighteen hundred, so here was a comfortable herd for Jonas to start out with, but upon the surface of the situation Jonas owed considerable money, which to some would have lent discouragement.

Mr. Hardy said, if Jonas desired, he would remain with him during the summer, a proposition that greatly pleased Jonas, particularly as in the early fall he was due to go east and could leave Mr. Hardy in charge, feeling greatly safer than leaving all with a stranger cowboy.

A few weeks had passed when it occurred to Jonas to begin upon the fencing of three sides of his property. When once this was completed it would relieve the necessity of providing, so much help to watch the herd.

About a month had passed since beginning the fencing, when one day a man appeared while they were at dinner. As a matter of course in that country he was at once invited to join them. Matters of general interest were commented upon while the meal was in progress, during which it had been discovered that the man was from Chicago, while he had discovered that Jonas was from New England, that he had recently purchased this ranch and was intending to make this section his home.

Finally the stranger led up to a proposition to join a party in Chicago, who owned the two ranches joining Jonas's on the south, and incorporate a company to operate the three altogether.

"But," replied Jonas, "I should be but a minority stockholder and my connections are such that I could not do that."

"See here," replied the stranger, "I am authorized

to make to you this proposition, with a capitalization of "Five Hundred Thousand," you can have One Hundred and Fifty Thousand for your ranch and stock. We will accept the same amount for our two ranches, each of equal acreage with yours, including our stock, then we will find "Two Hundred Thousand Dollars" to further stock and operate the full business, with you as an officer of the corporation. This would give us as fine a proposition in the ranch line as can be found in this country and the business that can be done is practically limitless. Now, my friend, is that a proposition that one can afford to have get by? I'll venture that never before was one made that was its equal. We admit that you have a good property and that it is especially well located, while because of certain features co-existent with its geographical position, it will greatly enhance the value of our property when united with it, and because of this, we make you this unprecedented proposition. Now, my friend, think the matter over for a few days, so great a change in your plans cannot be properly decided in a day. I am going over into Arizona to return the latter part of next week. This will allow you ample time to think the matter over."

"I shall probably not think much about it," Jonas replied. "As I said before, I should be largely in the minority and with absolute strangers. Were the proposition made to parties in acquaintance, who were not at all handicapped by other connections, it certainly would be worthy of acceptance."

"But," replied the other, "mayhap your other connections are not as valuable to you as this one will prove to be. You are out for the best you can get, are you not? Our people are familiar with ranch operations, much more so than you can consider yourself to be, therefore here is another advantage that will accrue to your benefit. Well, give the matter serious thought, Mr. Kent, and I will see you later."

Jonas and Mr. Hardy were each day so busy that nothing was said regarding the stranger's call, other than alluding to it in a general way. Jonas had said nothing to him concerning the proposition made to him, as that was a private matter entirely.

The days wore on and so did the fencing work, which was going to prove out quite a lengthy job, for three sides of ten thousand acres is a long way from home, and Jonas was having a good job done, always quoting that "anything worth doing at all, is worth well doing." Hardly before he realized it, the stranger again appeared just as they came forth from breakfast.

"Ah," cried Jonas, "guess somebody got left this trip, the neighbors were a bit slack in sending in the morning repast and there was scarcely sufficient to properly go around?"

"Ha, ha, ha," roared the stranger, "but it is you that is left with hunger yet abroad, just climb into the rear end there and I will soon dump you into the back yard of my hotel. There seemed to be quite a bite left over that found its way out the back door just before I took possession of this transportation rig. Indeed, I much prefer you would ride over and get a belly full. An empty or unsatisfied stomach is unpropitious for any satisfactory transaction of business."

"Yes, I suppose it may be," retorted Jonas, "but as no business is likely to be transacted between us, it does not promise to be of special interest to you. Personally, I can get on quite well until the neighbors once more contribute their mite to the hungry multitude."

This sally of Jonas had not altogether pleased the stranger, whose smile was but a contradiction to his anxious and disturbed countenance and the smile would not come off.

Pulling himself together finally, the stranger anxiously remarked: "But say, Mr. Kent, you do not

confess to having absolutely turned down, the royal opportunity that I placed in your young pathway, incredible that a young man can so ignore the chance of his life as to decide adversely? Why, man, it is unimaginable and really cannot be."

"But," retorted Jonas, "it is not only imaginable but the fact, in very truth, I cannot join you."

"Have you any proposition to make in return?" was the query. "Truly it is but fair when refusing a proposition that makes for your own advantage, to offer one in return that a possible compromise might result to our mutual advantage."

"No," replied Jonas, "I have none to make, having no interest in any change of my present plans."

"Would you consider the sale of your property at a reasonable figure?" inquired the stranger.

"Really," was the reply, "I do not care to make any change whatsoever. I have just bought in here with the decided intention of making it my permanent location for business. I have traveled far in the attempt to locate a satisfactory ranch, and this is the only one that had in all respects pleased me. I consider it 'my baby' and am decidedly opposed to parting with my pet."

"Will you consider granting us a right of way sufficient for our stock to reach the river? Inasmuch, as you are now fencing, we cannot reach water and will grant you any fair consideration for this right."

"I could not think of dividing my property. That certainly would result in frequent handicap, no man would consent to that and you would not were our positions reversed."

"Now see here, young man," retorted the other, "we are not expecting you to sacrifice anything in our behalf and don't ask you to. We are able and willing to compensate liberally for all that you may grant us, but for the moment place yourself in our position and think how you might regard us, when we should re-

fuse absolutely to assist you out of a predicament, when it had been made to our advantage to do so. You will neither amalgamate, sell, offer any proposition, nor even grant a small right of way, when either proposition will compensate you liberally. You simply occupy the position of a very obstinate mule. Now as between man and man, have you any moral right to act thus, when by such action you are working a decided injury to another?"

"My dear sir," retorted Jonas, "your accusation is in a measure just, in making it, however, you cannot know my reasons and how any change in my plans will affect my connections, as months may pass before I can locate another property so satisfactory for my purposes. The only one of your propositions I will consider anyway, is the one to purchase outright, and you must believe that with all I have told you, it will require much money to satisfy me in parting with 'my baby', but that you may not say that I have absolutely blocked your pathway in this direction, thereby causing you an irreparable damage, I will sell the ranch alone, not including stock or tools, upon a cash sale at ten dollars per acre."

"Mercy on us, Mr. Kent," cried the other, "I had thought perhaps after what you had said, that you might name us high as six, and had you, think we might have come together, but lordy Harry, where in the world do you expect to go to when you die?"

"I don't expect to go anywhere in the world," was the reply, "shall have done with locating here at that date."

"Well, Mr. Kent, I will undertake to get our people to give you six," replied the stranger.

"And I," retorted Jonas, "refuse to dicker at all and without prompt acceptance will withdraw my offer to sell, you know very well I prefer to retain the property."

"But," replied the other, "you will allow me suf-

ficient time to communicate with my associates? Of course, I cannot conclude so rank a deal without their knowledge and consent."

"Yes, I know," replied Jonas, "you can have ten days to decide and close the trade in. Should thirty days be necessary to assemble the money, I will agree to that, but remember, if the deal is to be made, a deposit of ten per cent shall be made during the ten days next following this day of our Lord."

Jonas now held up the fencing for a few days, as if his proposition was accepted. No fence would be desired, in fact, it might prove an incumbrance. He had no doubt but that they would secure the property, for how could they do otherwise? He was decidedly a menace to their interests, was in their way, and at any cost must be removed.

Mr. Hardy was now appraised of the happenings, although he had enjoyed his suspicions of what might have been in the wind. He well knew that in due time Jonas would communicate what he desired to concerning any matter, being much pleased that Jonas had sufficient confidence in himself, to decide matters without seeking advise from others, knowing this to be the only really safe way for anyone to adopt. As he often said, "He without sufficient self-reliance will drift astray, before the fickle and unbecoming winds of human nature."

Mr. Hardy had long before this discerned in Jonas many traits that served to please him; the way he had handled that Chicago man had greatly increased his respect for Jonas's ability, as a safe and self-protecting business man.

At the expiration of the ten days allotted for binding the property sale, the mail brought a letter of acceptance, enclosing a "banker's check" for the required deposit, demanding the full thirty days in which to complete the deal. Thus Jonas now found himself relieved of his "baby," as he mused, a big

step backward, now what provision could he make toward the support of the "Triple Alliance?" What would his associates think of such a turn in affairs, but on the other hand he would be much to the good through the transaction. It behooved him, however, to again go in search of "another baby" and get busy at it at once.

That evening Jonas and Mr. Hardy held a post-mortem over the departure of his pet and decided, that Mr. Hardy should place himself in communication with his authority, regarding the information he had received of the proposed sale of "Suicide Ranch," all of which in about a week Mr. Hardy had succeeded in doing. Soon thereafter, Jonas was put in communication with the young new owner of that property, who had given the notice that had resulted in the suicide of the lessee.

The letter from the young man stated that, "Inasmuch as the lessee has suicided, no contract now exists that can longer hold the property, and I will be very glad to close it out promptly, and to do this, will accept any reasonable proposition making the terms satisfactory to the purchaser," so here was the situation in a nutshell.

The present owner was a wild young chap, who never had been restrained, and therefore naturally became a spendthrift. It would make very little difference with his future, whether or not he received full value for this property, as he would "fire it all," anyway.

Mr. Hardy and Jonas talked the matter over as to the actual value of that land, which did not imply that Jonas would not attempt the usual tactics of purchasing, at as small a figure as possible. It was finally decided between them, that taken as a whole, considering location, immediate environments and improvements as they stood, a fair valuation as a workable proposition, was six dollars per acre for the fifteen thousand acres.

Jonas told Mr. Hardy he would himself take up the matter with the owner. To this Mr. Hardy readily assented, preferring Jonas should consummate his own bargains. Jonas preferred the owner should name his own price, then he could take it or leave it or make his return proposition. After several letters had passed between them, the owner suggested they leave the price to some disinterested parties to appraise, but Jonas insisted, that would occupy several days' time and he must know at once. Finally the owner insisted Jonas make him a lump sum offer.

Tired of the endeavor to obtain a price, Jonas as a starter named fifty thousand dollars cash payment as soon as deed was ready.

Jonas could now meet this payment, as the time allotted the purchasers of his ranch had now expired and he had received his money, and as he must at once vacate his former property, it was essential that this other one be rapidly acquired.

Upon receiving the proposition from Jonas, the owner did not wait for a letter to go through, but wired its acceptance at once, stating "deed will be mailed this night for collection by my bank," and the second day thereafter, Jonas was in full possession of his "new baby," and the following day, the movement of his stock was in progress.

The "new baby" was located about twenty miles below the first one on the Brazos river, and same as the other one, being bounded upon one side by the river. Thus, he was as well fixed regarding water as before, while there was a matter of three hundred acres already broken to the plough and partly fenced in.

To cast up where he was at, Jonas begun by taking the payment he had made for the "first baby." He had purchased it for "thirty thousand dollars." He had paid two thousand on the price and two thousand for the stock. To do this he had borrowed

temporarily from Bert five hundred. There had been a mortgage on the land of ten thousand and now the fact was, he owed Mr. Hardy "Eighteen thousand," Bert "five hundred," and a ten thousand mortgage, all amounting to "twenty eight thousand five hundred dollars." He had sold the first property for "one hundred thousand," thus the whole deal complete had left Jonas "seventy-one thousand five hundred dollars, with what was considered three thousand dollar's worth of stock. Then he had a loan of ten thousand from Ellis, with which he had placed the two thousand from his father and purchased under the option Mr. Hardy has taken, the large herd for "twelve thousand dollars," while this was known to be easily worth "fifteen thousand." Now the footing disclosed a net profit in property and cash of "seventy-five thousand five hundred dollars." "Who can say that is so very bad?" mused Jonas. But to go further, the "new baby" had cost "fifty thousand," when the consensus of opinion among ranchmen in general was, that considering the improvements there present, ten dollars an acre was an easy mark. Thus Jonas finds himself possessed of land valued at one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, stock and tools eighteen thousand five hundred, and cash sixteen thousand, after returning his father's loan. He yet held the ten thousand contributed by Ellis, which was intended for stock in a corporation that Jonas now proceeded to form. He had matters now where he could know what he wished to do.

Jonas had written his old friend of the railroad wreck, Mr. Shelby, all about what he had done and what he proposed to do, as he had planned, stating in the last letter that he desired one more stockholder who might become a director, to make up the legal quota, adding, that he did not need the money,

but would be pleased to have him take a little of the stock to legally equip him to serve as a director, say one thousand to five thousand, as he chose. He knew Mr. Shelby was retired and did not intend to enter business again, but preferred to have him to any other he knew, who was properly financially equipped. As Mr. Shelby's home was in Saint Louis, he could be in close touch with what was happening through Ellis, who would also become "secretary of the Ranch Company," and should matters of legal import require transaction, Ellis and Mr. Shelby, being a majority, could transact them without the presence of Jonas, or the necessity of their going to Fort Worth, where Jonas was to be located.

A reply to the last letter of Jonas brought from Mr. Shelby, a hearty acceptance of his proposition, with a check for the Five Thousand involved, saying that "himself and mother had been more than interested in his several letters," further adding, "No man shall tell us that we made any mistake when sizing you up. When you are domestically located, we are to make you a voluntary visit, my boy, expecting to find within your gates, a lady well worthy of your grand steel, believing that no other than a worthy one could gain entrance under your keen perception," closing with "God bless you, my boy, the marks of success are already stamped upon your brow."

While the papers were being prepared for incorporation, Jonas was very busy at the ranch in getting the tillage land as far as possible quickly seeded. It was a little late for some crops, thus he applied his attention to the later ones.

The suicide had done most of the ploughing and had a few acres of wheat and oats in, when he had received his notice to quit and did quit. He had been living alone for nearly a year since the death of his wife and concerning relatives, no one knew that he

had any. He had left about a thousand dollars' worth of stock, which had now become mixed with the herd Jonas had just placed there, but being branded could easily be separated should occasion require, but of course, Jonas would purchase the bunch when a bona-fide owner should appear.

The "Triplet Herding Company" was now incorporated. As usual the incorporators were dummies, who subsequently met and chose a board of directors, who were Jonas Kent, Ellis Slayton and Duncan Shelby. From the number of stockholders the corporation took its name. The company was capitalized at One Hundred Thousand Dollars, divided into one thousand shares at One Hundred Dollars each, of which Jonas held eight hundred fifty, Ellis one hundred and Mr. Shelby fifty, thus giving Jonas eight-five per cent with which to earn his contribution to "The Triple Alliance." Jonas had really turned in fifty per cent more value in property, than the par value of his stock. Nearly all the working capital then available had been supplied by Ellis and Mr. Shelby. While they had paid the par value for their stock, Jonas had actually allowed a great deal more than that for his, which, of course, had been made in the several profitable transactions that he had consummated, and who can say Jonas Kent had been dishonest or even dishonorable in the smallest degree? He had, to be sure, made use of thoroughly business methods, no philanthropy had been practiced, as he had bought at as low a figure as possible and he had sold at a high figure. It was simply his good fortune that he had dropped down in someone's way, and that good fortune had led up to the go-happy position, of possessing "the wherewithall" to satisfy the spendthrift owner of the suicide ranch. Jonas had been asked to make a proposition and he made it, really not believing it would

be accepted without some dicker, but when it was, he simply had to take the property over.

Jonas now had matters at the ranch in good working order. Mr. Hardy and wife were running the house, while Jonas and several of the help were boarders with them. This arrangement had been made for a year, when, as the Hardys retired as they had intended to, Jonas expected to find a proper couple to succeed them. It had never been his intention to reside out on the plains, his intentions had been to take a place in the city of Fort Worth, either by lease or purchase, for he could not even think of placing Bella out in a comparative wilderness, with her young and vivacious personality. Ah, no, the city must be hers and where she could not know a lonely moment, when most of his time would necessarily be spent out upon the ranch, which was about a one-hour ride from the city. Thus he could commute and remain in the city whenever it pleased him to do so.

As about two-thirds of the time before Jonas was to go east again had now passed, he decided to visit Fort Worth and look the city over, to determine, if possible, what section of the city was best suited to his tastes and what he should consider, would best please his Bella as a location for their home. Jonas was a bit fastidious concerning this phase of their case, as he was naturally a home man, regarding home as about all there is in life, after declaiming to himself, "my home shall be my castle and there will I remain whenever possible, to enjoy the enchantment created through the good fortune, of possessing an attractive and loving wife."

Monday morning the first train into the city delivered Jonas Kent at the Union Station, and soon he was out for a day's walk. This was an occasion where "hoofing it" seemed to be the thing to do, as he was out to do the city in detail. He might occa-

sionally take a trolley to help out, but he desired to know the city as there were many good sections, but none without some objection from his standpoint, at least, he did not consider himself wealthy and thus he was handicapped a bit, when considering some of the large places that met his view, and yet, what for did he and Bella desire an overgrown palace? No, they did not, a medium-sized cosy home should properly be theirs, and he wished it upon somewhat of an elevation.

When nearing late afternoon, he noticed a hill, or seemingly a hill, about a mile away. He soon crossed to the next block where a trolley line passed and in due time reached the neighborhood of that hill. It had not been greatly built up, in fact, a part of it was but a "cow pasture," and this the highest part, here was a tract of about ten acres. As he stood there gazing about in all directions over the city, the idea of buying anything in that crowded city seemed at once repulsive to Jonas Kent. "No," he said, "here is the place to pitch my tent and here is the place to live. Why have the citizens of that city elected to stall themselves? What sane reason should dictate that, when here is abundant air and sunshine just as doled out by the God of nature, entirely free from the contamination of the city through the beastly habits of depraved men? No more of that for me. A country home, indeed, but adjacent to the company of a city and its improvements. Here I will build my castle and here I will install my Bella, if possible to secure this plot of ground."

With such intent uppermost in his mind, Jonas sauntered forth in quest of the owner of that "cow pasture." Having finally located him, it was rather late to attempt to reach him that day, and he concluded to remain overnight and take an early start.

At the hotel that evening he fell to talking with a man, who happened to be a resident of the section he

had been so taken with. He took occasion to extract from the stranger some points regarding this elevation, and discovered that the present owner was a peculiar sort of man, practically a hermit and one who had become very much opposed to the human family in general, in fact, had sworn off dealing with any person whatsoever, unless absolutely necessary in obtaining supplies.

Here, then, was something of a dilemma that might daunt some, but Jonas just became eager to encounter that man, believing he could conquer his aversion to man, at least so far as he was concerned. He did not live in the hill section, but upon the opposite side of the city in a little old house built a couple of generations before.

Mid-forenoon of the following day Jonas approached the gate opening into the hermit's dooryard, and before he had taken many steps forward, a little full-bearded elderly man appeared in the doorway, greeting Jonas with, "Here, young man, do you not realize that you are a trespasser?"

"Ha, ha, ha," roared Jonas, "I guess not, my good old friend, I never do such things and you might know that I dont. Don't you see, my good friend, that no notice is posted hereabouts to warn one that he might be trespassing after entering that gate? Can you expect a man to break a law before a law has been enacted and before the people have been advised of it, what legal or moral code could obtain among the affairs of men were such a condition in vogue? You, my friend, may not like the human family particularly well, but to retain a particle of self-respect, you have to consider the moral right of others to live, if upon their own resources, and to live, means freedom to course wherever they are not forbidden, simply this, my good friend, you had to post your notice before I entered, to prove me a trespasser, and now I am here, what are you going to do about it? I have come not to bring

war, but just a fellow greeting. Are you so uncivil and devoid of all self-respect, that you cannot welcome me as a 'stranger within your gates,' to whom decency, simply decency, is always due?"

"Stop, stop, stop, right where you are, listen, listen, while I tell you that the Lord God A'mighty never before created so nervy, conceited, outrageously impudent a cuss as you. There is nothing derogative and humiliating to a fellow, that you, with your saucy tongue, cannot remind him of. I really believe you have told more truths concerning myself than ever before I have listened to. You have argued your position complete. Your logic has been perfect and I concede your points, every one. Grasp my hand if you will and then advise me of what I can do to serve you. My God, I have never before met your sort and am loath to consider it as but a dream."

"Ha, ha, ha," again roared Jonas, "I am heartily glad that you are again coming back to your own. You have strayed away from yourself, my good friend, none have injured you other than yourself and I can see, that the light of reason is now beginning to shine through your warped intellect. You have been a brute to yourself, my man, now take my hand please, and happily say, that you will arise from the slough of despond and suspicion, to once again become a man as becomes a creature that has claimed the attention of the Almighty sufficient to create him. Do you not as a 'God-made image,' recognize any obligation to others of the same creation? You have to admit that you came through Adam and that Adam produced two kinds, do you then wish to be compared with the Cain breed? I am sure you do not, my good friend, and now, that it is under peculiar coincidences that we have become good friends, pray tell, are we to remain so? Truly, you do not wish it otherwise and I will endeavor to prevent my coming from being to you a dream."

"Right you are, my young friend, right you are in

every pose of your attack upon me. No longer will I live the life of the hermit and will pray God to send you often, to send the new light through as you have already begun."

"Well, Mr. Burnett, I thank you for your kind consideration and am pleased, that I am no longer to be considered a trespasser. Now to the purpose of my visit, if you will. I came to inquire concerning a property that I am told belongs to you, aye, the pasture lot on yonder hill. You have inquired as how you might serve me, not, however, to take any undue advantage or our unmistakable friendship, I would be much pleased to learn if you will consider me as a prospective purchaser. I have recently become interested in a sizable ranch a little way out, and being about to take a bride from the far east, my own native heath, have conceived the idea that a good place to locate her would be upon that sightly rise."

"Yes, yes," replied the old man, "I greatly admire your judgment and were I to take a wife, should like to place her there. Yes, I do own that pasture and have many a time been importuned to part with it, but never have seriously regarded it. Why, I do not really know, other than I have not needed the money it might bring me. One man seemed to badly want it, but I consider him too mean a cuss to be allowed to own as good as that. But, my friend, for you, after having stated your desire to make for yourself a home, I will name a price and it shall not be a prohibitive one. There are ten acres in the plot and you shall own it upon the exchange of 'five thousand dollars,' payable one-half cash, with the balance in a note payable when you may desire."

"Shall this note be secured by mortgage?" Jonas inquired.

"No, indeed not," replied the other. "I have got more than 'Twenty-five Hundred' worth of confidence

in you, my boy, I hope you take the property and shall delight to see you living there."

The stranger with whom Jonas had talked at the hotel regarding the pasture lot, had said the property was worth "eight to ten thousand dollars," but it was what Jonas wanted, and for what he really wanted, he was not one to consider the splitting of hairs, he considered nothing too good and too costly when connected with his Bella. Thus, a lawyer was directed to fix up the papers, while Jonas temporarily borrowed "Twenty-five Hundred" from the "herding company" treasury, to make in full the prompt pay-payment. After securing the deed, he at once hiked for an architect to prepare plans and specifications, for a house costing about ten thousand dollars, not a large structure but nice in every respect, and everybody must hustle, for less than three months now remained before the time he should need it, if he were to take Bella to her new home immediately upon his return from the eastern trip, which, however, might be prolonged a little should the house be not quite complete.

While he remained, he spent much of the time at the office of the architect, both to hasten as much as possible the preparation of the plans and to counsel with the architect, regarding special features that he desired should be incorporated. In three weeks the plans were ready for the contractors and the successful bidder was soon upon the job, under contract for completion October the twentieth.

It was now the twenthy-fifth of August and Jonas planned to go east upon September first, intending to stop a few days with Mr. Shelby in Saint Louis and also to visit some with Ellis before they should depart.

Ellis had now taken possession of his inheritance, which included his uncle's nice residence, thus he was well provided with a home for his coming bride, and was much elated at what Jonas had told him concern-

ing his home arrangements. Thus it appeared that neither of the twins would have anything on the other, as both were to have nice homes all provided in advance of their coming.

Letters thick and fast had traveled between the lovers, but not a word of what was being done for their homes was written to the girls. This matter was intended by the boys to serve as a surprise upon their arrival, while they joyously anticipated this feature of the coming event.

Jonas was royally entertained by the Shelbys, not enough could be done for his pleasure and comfort, however, he was required to promise that upon his return, a few days with his bride must be spent with them.

Ellis had now become acquainted with the good Shelby people, and the fact that he was to marry the twin sister of Jonas's fiancee, greatly excited their interest in him and they frequently alluded to the whole proceeding, as the most unique and original combination of elements, all through, that the agency of man had ever constructed, in fact, some phases of the case seemed to them upon its face ridiculous, and even impossible, yet considering the honorable and persistent personality involved, in the personnel of the different enterprises, they now doubted not the final success of "The Triple Alliance," declaring they should watch the affair with greater interest, than any that ever had come under their observation.

The boys remained in St. Louis longer than they had intended, because of the interest and courtesy shown them by the Shelbys, nearly two weeks having passed before they were off.

Jonas had inspected everything in which Ellis was interested and was glad, indeed, to note the excellent home he had awaiting the coming of Betty Hart, his interest in whom being practically as great as in Bella. Neither of the boys could account for this double in-

terest existing between themselves and these twins, and yet they could more easily solve this unnatural situation than the position of the twins toward them, for really they were different, as they must be of course, and only one explanation seemed at all pertinent to them. Mrs. Hart had said, "Always, the girls have seemed to possess the same likes and dislikes regarding acquaintances, if one likes a person so does the other, and it has been generally so with everything else," adding, "it has seemed a dual personality in very truth, ever since they were old enough to begin to notice things."

Even now the boys knew they could not in certainty identify the girls, should the girls persist in adorning themselves alike. The situation seemed ridiculous and absolutely an absurd one, while mayhap the reader has so considered it from the very first, but nevertheless, the situation was a real one and true as between these four individuals, but Mr. and Mrs. Shelby had remarked that they believed after a day's acquaintance, they could distinguish between the girls, while Ellis and Jonas had their doubts.

Since the last parting all of the boys had often communicated with each other, greatly more in detail than had they during their previous separation, but had not entered into details regarding their constructive affairs, only generalizing regarding conditions and prospects, as might be usually done between any acquaintances operating separate interests.

"The Triple Alliance" did not in any degree become possessed of the property acquired by each member. It was not, and could not under the compact, become interested in property ownership, the profit from each business, only, was involved. Thus one might possess a much greater property value than another, without contributing more largely or even as great to "The Triple Alliance," it being that some enterprises have a greater earning power than do others, the asset

value of each individual in the "Alliance" being the value of the stock he holds, reduced to one-third of the sum total, available for an equal and equitable division.

Jonas and Ellis were off on the morrow for the east, intending to stop off a few days and look Basil over, and a day or two before starting had wired Basil to that effect, demanding a reply if he would be there to receive them; if receiving no reply would consider he already had gone to New England and continue on without stopping. Thus we now have them on the run, but where is Wesley?

CHAPTER VII

THAT IRRESISTIBLE "YANKEE"

Wesley, after leaving Jonas and Ellis in St. Louis, made a rapid trip through to Pueblo. Arriving at station he was met upon the platform by the engineer, whom he had employed to lay out his work at the mines. He accidentally happening to be there present, was greatly surprised and also as greatly pleased to see Wesley, and they were shaking hands very heartily when the engineer shouted:

"Ah, ha, and here again is that 'Incorrigible Yankee,' I'll be bound but it is refreshing to see you. No bad luck has come your way I'll wager upon the expression of that trim countenance. Ah, ha, my boy, yours is a lucky star indeed, you go east and you come west, all is ever the same, a kind fate ever dogs your footsteps, making of your life a charmed one. A clear conscience reigns within your personality. No accusing factions foully cross your pathway, for you have been a man, always a man. But say, it's great, it's great, I tell you it's monstrous great."

"Well, well," cried Wesley, "what is great, have you simply gone luny? Tell me quick. I am not great but much smaller than you, both mentally and physically, what mean you, then, you most natural scion of the wild and woolly west? Ha, ha, ha," roared they both.

"How is the diggin's, old fellow?" cried Wesley. "That's what may be great, in my estimation."

"Yes, yes," retorted the other, "that's it, that's it, that's what I'm a trying to beat into your slowly grasping intellect. Great heaven, man, when down to the bottom of the Jackson and drift in a way, what do they find there, but money, money in buckets full. Why man alive, nothing hereabouts has even touched

one side of that Jackson 'hole in the ground,' and it's because it is yours, no other man's luck would ever have made it what it is."

"No, no," cried Wesley, "I will not allow you to run on this way, as it is not luck at all. That business is a gamble that requires other than luck to develop, the three elements called judgment, nerve and money are all that are necessary in developing 'God's great gift to man,' the ground is but the storehouse, the bounty 'a kindness to man,' endowed upon him by Almighty God at the date of the creation. One has no moral right to involve with man's conscientious and persistent endeavor, anything so pernicious as a game termed 'luck,' which is only synonymous of, and contributory to, 'rank shiftlessness.' No, my friend, I will not be a party to anything that smells of that scent. Glad to have met you, my friend, and may need you again in a few days, 'The Prohib' is not discouraging I suppose?"

"Ah, ha, ha," roared the other, "no more news here, goodnight."

Upon reaching the hotel, and the register by Wesley, the clerk cried out in surprise:

"Well, well, how are you, how are you, but my God, my God, are you not a lucky dog! A Yankee for mine each time and always. Say, my man, you have something great coming."

Wesley soon visited the dining-room, to repair the ravages the long ride had made upon his stomach, and seating himself at the farther end of the lobby, was soon musing upon the wild and excitable statement of his friend, the engineer, when a sharp slap upon the shoulder, accompanied by a loud laugh and salute of "A Yankee, a Yankee, yes, yes, a d—d Yankee for mine," cried Mr. Yates. "How did fate discover that you were the one to bring order out of chaos and to make this old earth disgorge, disgorge, I say, from its hidden bowels, the very cream of wealth it has so self-

ishly and persistently stuck fast to all these years, and in spite of the earnest and laborious work of man, you, I say, you alone, have been able to uncover this large tonnage of wealth."

"Hold your horses, my good friend," cried Wesley, "have you all gone insane since I departed. I have listened to but little since I arrived in town, that did not savor of intense lunyism. Now tell me, pray, of what is it all about, that has so affected the staid and the true?"

"Well said, my young man," replied the other, "the old town has well nigh gone agog, I confess, at what you are responsible for in opening up that pair of 'holes in the ground.' That pair of 'Yankee holes' are sufficient, even this far developed, to turn the common flow of avarice in man into a flood-tide stream. Twenty feet down after striking good ore they drift out two opposite ways twenty-five feet and thus far, are into the richest deposit yet struck in this section, assayed to run sixty per cent silver with remainder gold, in a dirt containing fifteen per cent mineral. Now, you see, my boy, here is around two hundred dollars for each ton of hoisted ore dirt; now this for old Jackson, surely 'those horrid spooks' were not greatly to be blamed, for rigidly guarding such treasure as that."

"Well," inquired Wesley, "how is 'old Prohib,' have they cut into her bowels much yet, and if so, how does she feel about it, anything worth groveling for? By jove, I have been expecting she would open rather grand, or is she going to be true to her name and 'prohibit' the disturbance of her sacred treasure, being unwilling to help out that 'poor Yankee' in assisting to satisfy his wicked avarice. Think you not, Friend Yates, that she will come in on that?"

"I really can't tell you much about that," was the reply, "they have plunged into her quite a ways, but Jack Loon is the one man to furnish information that may be relied upon. I think they have run into good

signs, however. A man dropped in the other day inquiring for stock in 'The Yankee Mining Company' and inquired what the premium might be if any could be obtained, and before leaving directed me to advice him should any become available, 'believing,' he said, 'that there is going to be something quite worthy of any man's money'."

The following morning, Wesley called the engineer to have him go out to the mines with him, and when arriving there inquired for Jack, but he was down in the working, when Wesley remarked, "We will go down and look around a bit." A hundred feet in the bowels of old earth, truly a new experience for "the boy Wesley," college-bred and unsophisticated in all this rough rabble, but it created within him a sensationable experience that he often referred to in after years, as the most thrilling of anything he had ever encountered, and would not part with the memory of it for anything earthly, in looking about through the glimmer of the light, produced by those weird looking lamps upon the men's hats, as seeming but the eyes of a score of demons all vigorously engaged in protecting their treasure, which lay profusely all about and glistening all over, like the spangles of a richly adorned lady. As he gazed at the walls all about him, he solemnly declared, "The sensation seems to be that I am just buried, buried deep and permanently in silver and gold, and while the whole world of humanity is struggling with each other to obtain a pittance, as it were, here I am completely surrounded by that commodity for which humanity is wearing its life away. Now, then, comes to my mind, full and complete satisfaction regarding the choice that I have made, when selecting the 'kind of baby' I have preferred to rear."

The fascination that now held him in complete subservience, he found it difficult to throw off. Were he alone there, he would have remained there for hours; it was not, however, wholly because it was his very

own, for Wesley was not one who could justly be termed an avaricious character. True, he was ambitious to succeed in his endeavor, indeed he must, to keep pace with his associates in "The Alliance." Other than to satisfy his ambition in that direction, he was not a grasper, he cared not for money for money's sake. Among his schoolmates he was known as a "happy-go-lucky, generous hearted chap," ever ready to divide with others whatever he might have that was desired by them. He often had quoted his opinion of character thus:

A covetous man can have no soul,
A stingy chap ne'er reaches a goal,
A streak of meanness will cast one down,
A dirty trait will produce a clown.

Wesley had met Jack down in the working and from him obtained information concerning "the Prohib," which he found to be nothing of a wonderful nature as yet. They had tunneled about a hundred feet with nothing especially encouraging, except in the last few feet where they had encountered a combination of deposit that was generally known as mineral wall, and which indicated that mineral should be near. Jack, however, was not posted up to date concerning all that had occurred at "the Prohib." Selkirk had immediate charge of that at present and he had gone to Denver to obtain some additional machinery, and incidentally to meet his father, who had business there in the interest of his company in Montana. Denver being a kind of half-way house between their two locations, thus, they could, by a little correspondence, arrange to meet whenever occasion demanded their presence in Denver, where occasionally all mining operators have to go for supplies, no other place carrying a full equipment.

Wesley and the engineer spent the day about the

Jackson. They had decided to not visit "the Prohib" until Selkirk returned, which it was understood would be the following Saturday night.

The engineer had some suggestions to make regarding operations and equipment at the Jackson, advising that they might now feel warranted in proceeding with plans for a full "mining and stamping plant." Thus far they had but crushed the ore and shipped it down the line for milling, but now it was considered the profit upon that mine was sufficient, to meet all expense incurred at both mines and would be much more than that, before a "complete milling plant" could be completed. Thus they would have ample funds on hand to construct the plant if commenced right away, the engineer adding, "The tunnel to the main vein at 'the Prohib' will be complete upon the completion of the milling plant, and they will need the plant at once upon the completion of the tunnel." Here, then, the business might be focused all in complete shape at about the same time, thus Wesley could witness the full operation of his mines before going east after his bride.

That evening Wesley took occasion to write his good friends, the Hunts and the Jacksons, in advising them of his return, after which he and Mr. Yates held a long and spirited conversation, as both were equally elated over the present conditions and prospects, as Mr. Yates expressed it, "Well we might be, here we have properties carrying a capitalization of 'one hundred thousand' that justify a capitalization of 'several million,' as such things are usually burdened. Thus it can be easily assumed that the percentage in profits, that will accrue to the stock can be something very unusual indeed, extravagantly so." Although Mr. Yates had but a comparatively small holding, he could readily see that the three thousand invested in that stock, would recover for him annually more than his annual profit accruing from the hotel, as he

said, "The thing has gone far enough to prove that already."

Saturday evening, Wesley strolled down to the railroad station at the time for arrival of the Denver train, when soon after the train rolled in, the two, Selkirk and Wesley, were closely and strongly in each other's embrace. It seemed to them that they had been separated for years, they laughed, shouted and even cried, in their joy at meeting, each had so much to communicate to the other, and along such various lines, but at midnight, however, they voted to adjourn, else would not be in good condition to resume on the morrow.

Next day was Sunday, and both being church boys, to church they both went; in the afternoon they strolled forth to browse in the park. The conversation on this occasion in respect for the day, mostly was along the lines of Wesley's experiences while at his home in the east. Selkirk and he had become so closely allied through a natural affinity, that had from the first sprung up between them, that many confidences that would naturally be barred, were pertinent to be unfolded between them, thus, Wesley hesitated not to inform Selkirk, much concerning his engagement affairs and those of his "Alliance associates." The incidents concerning the twins were greatly enjoyed by Selkirk, as Wesley took considerable pride in describing the embarrassment brought about, through the duplicity of his twin sisters, enlarging upon the point of their enjoyment at the complex and ludicrous situations that they were responsible for, through a captivating desire to conceal their identity. Wesley had been quite conversant with the troubles that Jonas and Ellis had encountered in rounding the twins up, and now, that all had been satisfactorily adjusted all were happy at the outcome. The affair, altogether taken, was now as a wheel within a wheel, and so much so that it could be considered no breech of confidence

to joke upon so personal a matter. These boys, Selkirk and Wesley, made a gala time of it and Selkirk became greatly impatient to meet all the parties concerned, the boys in particular.

Wesley had before told Selkirk upon a former confidential occasion of their "Alliance compact," and now he unfolded to him the location and kind of his associates' "babies," and all that he knew concerning them, which so interested Selkirk that his usual equipoise seemed to desert him, and in wonder, amazement and pleasure, he roared and screamed, "What a jolly set you all are, the whole eight of you, how I would like to meet you when all together. Great, great, great, nothing ever so great and coming about so natural, too, all old schoolmates but one stray ox, and he must be of the same breed to fit in so quickly and nicely, however could human nature in so many parts, be so naturally and completely welded into what appears to be, 'one jolly go-happy-as-you-please family unit?' amazingly wonderful!"

Monday morning Wesley and Selkirk started for "the Prohib" and spent the full day upon the property. They learned upon arriving there, that on Saturday the men had opened up a vein of very rich dirt, not so wide a vein as the main vein they were drifting to was supposed to be, but the dirt was equally rich as that that had been reported, while this new vein had not before been known to exist.

The engineer had been loud in acclaim, that many unexpected good things would be encountered upon that property, and predicting another good vein would be crossed before reaching the shaft they were driving for.

While upon this new find they could mine at a good profit, it was decided to proceed as before for the objective point, but the dirt they took from the heading in crossing the new vein, had furnished them

a clue as to what they might expect from that vein, thus, "the Prohib" had scored one for sure.

Wesley and Selkirk went over the ground outside and selected a spot upon which to erect the crushing plant for the Prohib, and the day following they brought along the engineer and went further down the line, to select a location for the milling and stamping plant, intending to locate this about midway between the two mines, when by elevating the crushed material to a height of about seventy feet, could run tram cars by gravity down to the milling plant from either way, and by an auxiliary tram, lighter built and reversed in grade, the empty cars could be pulled back by a cable attached to the loaded car, by using two sheives at each end.

The crushing plants were to be located upon much higher ground than the milling plant. Thus the two-mile distance between each mine and the milling plant could easily be made by a gravity proposition, and after once constructed, would cheaply convey the material from both mines to the central or milling plant. Railroad freight charges would then be comparatively small.

The engineer and the bosses were now concentrating their efforts, upon the construction of this huge milling plant. It was estimated to cost Forty Thousand Dollars, and timed to be constructed complete within three months.

The following week Wesley received a letter from his Colorado Springs friends, the Jacksons, inviting and strongly urging him to spend the following week-end with them, saying it was but a half day's ride and they wished for all the news, and Wesley certainly would not disappoint them. He truly and fully appreciated this worthy old couple, resolving to spare no pains to cause them joy, thus Saturday noon found him comfortably seated in the railway train bound for Colorado Springs.

That the old people were immensely pleased at his coming, need not be recited, full time, with some overtime, being graciously allotted Wesley to tell, as the old man expressed it, "all you know and have experienced since we met, and then some more that you wanted to experience if the lady had been willing."

"Now, Cyrus Jackson, I am actually ashamed of you," cried Mrs. Jackson, "you'll never be old enough to learn how to be decent. I am discouraged in trying to improve you and have found forty years, too short a time to accomplish much at it."

"Well, mother," retorted Mr. Jackson, "did it ever occur to you that perhaps your teaching was deficient, sometimes, you know, we overlook our own shortcomings. I don't say, really, that you have any such, mother, only made a suggestion you know."

"Incorrigible and impossible," sharply retorted mother, "I hope Mrs. Hart-to-be will never, never, have to encounter such as you."

"No, no, mother, she will not, you know that she is out of my time, moreover, you know that probably we might not have thought just alike. It is an excellent thing, I have always argued, that all people do not like the same, for if they had, mother, you might have met a good deal of competition and lost out on poor me." "Ha, ha, ha," roared they all. But this had taken the spice out of mother and she allowed she would quit.

Wesley related to these good friends all of what he knew concerning the mines, and what others had said, about them. When questioned concerning his trip east, he felt it was their due to inform them of much that had occurred at that end. When describing the troubles his associates had experienced in attempting to identify the twins, and how matters were finally and satisfactorily rounded up, this jolly old

couple became convulsed with laughter, the old man exclaiming: "Well, mother, that just beats by more than a mile all the torments you ever was wicked enough to submit to my grateful attention. My, oh my, but the poor men do have their ugly troubles."

"Yes they do," retorted mother, "but they are not severe enough to check them a bit. The poor girls cannot rid themselves of a man when once he is started for one and it began in the 'Garden of Eden'."

"Yes, mother, so it did," said Mr. Jackson, "but even there, Eve came after Adam we are told, and all authentic information, I believe, conveys the impression that she has been after him ever since, while I have never heard it disputed that she has thus far been fairly successful in her efforts." "Ha, ha, ha," roared the men, a bit to the discomfiture of mother, who replied, "another dose, Cyrus Jackson, of your superior intellect that for forty years I have been so greatly entertained with: this is quite as fitting as most of your attempts, in attacking the most beneficent and kindly disposed friends man ever had."

"Yes, yes, mother," cried Cyrus, "you are right, just right, always right, but Adam was first you must admit and you all kept along after him until the poor man was caught."

"Wesley, you don't agree with all this stuff and nonsense," cried mother, "I know you don't and would not be so ungallant, as to treat your estimable young lady to a dose of this kind and neither would Cyrus Jackson, once upon a time."

"No indeed," replied Wesley, "neither would Mr. Jackson, could he in any better way express his full appreciation, of what he has been fortunate enough to capture. None can tell how many, many hours during the midnight watch so many years ago, he lay tossing too and fro upon his couch in doubt and fev-

erish anxiety as to how you might dispose of him. I dare say he prefers to not recall any part of those anixous hours, but my own experience has taught me that he had them to endure, although I have to confess that a kind fate so decreed, that I was not overburdened with such as he might have had to endure."

"There, my good Wesley," said mother, "you have my hand for that fine speech and I heartily congratulate the 'Mrs. Hart-to-be,' upon the success she has achieved in selecting her mate. May the good Lord bless and guide you for what you may be to each other. She has chosen a true knight as her consort and it does my old heart good to know that there are some among the rising generation, that this old and fickle world may regard as proper to assume and conduct the intricate affairs of men. It is a sad thought that we of our generation are soon to pass on, leaving that in which we have been so greatly interested, in the care of whom, with so many unreliable and selfish people wholly unfit and even indisposed, to make good in the full position we have held and fought for."

Wesley remained with his entertaining hosts until Tuesday noon, leaving with the understanding between them that when the milling plant is complete, they are to visit him in Pueblo to inspect the plant and witness the operation throughout. Wesley had intimated that they might enjoy the opening day, having the full board of directors present with their families, or those who enjoyed the good fortune of having one, he added. Mr. Yates had suggested it some time ago, saying he would be glad to entertain them as host of the occasion.

The Jacksons were highly pleased at the plan, saying they would be delighted to again meet that amiable and delightful old couple, "the Hunts," and

should look forward to the occasion with unbounded pleasure and expectation.

Upon Wesley's return Tuesday evening, Mr. Yates saw him as he entered the dining-room and followed him in, slapped him upon the shoulder with an old-fashioned salute: "My God, boy, better and better and more of it, at the 'Jackson' there is another spook to-day encountered, running crosswise of the spook they are working and declared to be a considerably wider one and richer. The particulars in detail I have not. The engineer dropped in a minute saying he had just heard of it and did not hesitate to believe it, adding that, I believe that ground will be found to contain numerous veins and should be surprised if even yet, we have uncovered the best the property affords."

"Yankee luck, I call it," added Mr. Yates, "nobody but a 'dare devil Yankee', would ever tackle a bunch of spooks. There this property had stood and there it would have stood for another decade, had you not happened along with the barrel of nerve, gall and sand."

"Oh, come off," cried Wesley, "Give us a well-earned rest, let us remain yet awhile, down here upon this wealthy old earth and enjoy the full pleasure of pleasing the Creator of all this, by using our best endeavor in placing available to mankind, the rich bounty of a good God in Heaven. The God of Nature is first, we are but subordinate, we have but to perform our duty, he will care for the results and should have the plaudit."

"You are a funny fellow altogether," retorted Mr. Yates, "indeed, you are more than a Yankee, you are 'it,' the whole show, and at least one of the clowns, moreover, so almighty inconsequential as summed up by yourself, that one cannot feel safe in attempting to place you. It has been said, 'to the victor belong the spoils,' in conquering the spook

aversion, you secured the spoils that you believed Almighty God placed in that ground. Why, then, are you not the person to whom the credit belongs, thus, why not receive it from your good friends and true? Truly it must be accorded to someone. Ah, my young friend, your logic is not good, your evasion of responsibility is wrong and unjust to yourself."

The following morning, Wesley called the engineer to go out to the mines with him, stopping at "the Prohib" first. They, with Selkirk, spent some time together, first in discussing the new feature at "the Jackson," which all believed was but a precursor to greater things, further, "the Prohib" has been worked into quite a bit, upon the newly discovered vein both ways from the tunnel. Some samples of the rock bordering upon the vein itself had elicited attention, a mineral content being discovered known to be not gold or silver, but that it was mineral in quite preceptible quantities there was no question. This new vein was in the mountain nearly a hundred feet and about half way in to the shaft they were working to intersect. The side of the mountain above the tunnel was very abrupt, thus it was evident that this deposit might extend upward at least a hundred feet, the depth, of course, none could ever dream of. But the vein was proven to possess the same tendency to widen as it descended, that the main vein was known to have, thus was here present a deposit to be counted upon.

It was decided to secure a few lumps of this apparently valuable and unknown deposit and ship to Denver for analysis. There were good chemists there, and Wesley desired to learn of what "his baby" might contain that might prove valuable; he counted it even criminal to overlook a part of nature's bounty to man, as it would really prove him neglectful and recreant to his trust, were he unmindful of consideration for every factor of "his baby's" make-up.

A half day being spent at "the Prohib," they all proceeded across to "the Jackson," where, they found much excitement among the men employed.

Jack happened to be upon the surface as they arrived. Rushing up to Wesley, he grabbed his hand in a wild sort of way and yelled, "they called you 'that damned Yankee,' but lordy Harry, that don't begin to git it, spooks or no spooks, b'gosh, here it is, waving his hand all around. Here is a line o'dough this way, a line o' dough that way, b'gosh, all held tight from the cowards of Colorado, by a damnable an' insignificant boodle of spooks, until one day a man came along, b'gosh, a man, I say, an' nothin' truly to be called a man could Colorado claim, who could dare to tackle a set of 'wealthy spooks,' so the dog-goned cowards sneaked off, b'gosh, sneaked off an' left all this real dough to them as didn't know how to use it, nor what 'twas put there by God A'mighty for, when along comes a man, 'a d—d Yankee,' they said it was, an' he said, 'just show up yer spooks, let's see what they're lookin' like.' Behold what happens, b'gosh, an' what'll continue to happen an' sackcloth and ashes is a fillin' the boots an' stomachs of a score o' Colorado cowards today, with a whole bunch o' I-told-you-so's a sneakin' 'round behind the fences. The God of Heaven will grant you luck, Mr. Hart, Yankee or no Yankee, for bein' true to your courage an' your parents also, that are responsible for yer bein' abroad this day. You have got in that hole somethin' worth talkin' about, it's a hole that what is a hole, and a better hole than any other man own's, b'gosh."

The visitors stood there and roared, while Jack was delivering his oration, and then asked to be allowed to visit "the spooks," when down where the men were at work disturbing old nature from its long sleep, the lamps made visible at the junction of

the two veins, a thoroughly beautiful sight looking out four different ways, gold and silver all around. Aside from its mon etary value, the sight was one ever to be remembered and ever will be by those three people, even the engineer, as one more or less accustomed to grand mineral displays, confessed to having never before witnessed anything like this, and Selkirk shouted: "If only my father could view this display of nature's bounty!"

Wesley, of course, had the more reason to feel elated, when considering the prospective view of the situation. Here was wealth, here was some contribution for "the Triple Alliance," and Wesley thought perhaps he need not to worry greatly, concerning his ability to cope with his associates in amount, apparently he was to be assisted by the "spook" family and then the "Prohib." He had felt more certain of that than of "the Jackson." However, one or the other or both, were his to make much or little of, through the strenuous efforts he intended to put forth, considering he had no moral or physical right to use less than his full endeavor, in the development of what had been almost miraculously placed in his hands, by what he was pleased to term "kindly providential action."

Matters had so shaped themselves now that Wesley was more impatient than ever to complete their new "milling plant." It was not believed that the "toll mill" was fully extracting the mineral from the dirt, and this greatly nerved him, when considering he had no right to allow a wanton waste in this rich bounty of nature.

Although the contracts had been placed and the substructure was already quite well underway, he chafed to rush matters faster, but the engineer advised him that "too much haste would make waste," that the quality of work from the mill would be proportionate to quality embodied in its construction.

Wesley soon applied himself to action concerning

a home for Sybil, and of course himself as well. He had looked about some for a location sufficient to decide what section of the city suited him best, but he could not seem to find just what he wanted in a vacant lot. The most desirable locations were already taken up and builded upon; none of the good places such as he would be satisfied with were for sale. For a few days he inquired about some, but none seemed to know of anything except the cheaper class, while the well-to-do people appeared content with their present abodes. Mr. Yates, however, was knowing to Wesley's desire and kept an eye out for his interest.

When, one day, Wesley came in rather disgusted in appearance, with a smile at his dejected demeanor, Mr. Yates slapped him upon the shoulder with "Look ye here, my boy," handing him a paper showing a photographic print of a residence advertised for sale, "something grand enough even for a 'New England Yankee' with a 'spook' behind to boost him, ha, ha, ha," roared Mr. Yates.

"But," retorted Wesley, "why do you take pleasure in tantalizing me, whatever have I done to deserve it?"

"But man alive, is that not sufficient for thy fastidious taste? Surely, many a man would envy another, possessed of the like of that, and you, my boy, seem possessed of more pride than a poor man should have. Pray tell, what would you, then, that a friend should put before you?"

"Ah, ha, kind friend that thou art, stop, I pray thee, stop and ponder," cried Wesley, "what thinkest thou that my bank account containeth, that such as that picture shows should be brought forth to assail it. True, I have something of a prospective to think about, but the real pith of it may yet be quite distant, and would it be wise to load an elephant upon one's back, when a dove would be more appropriate?"

"Ah, young man, I suspect the dove is already loaded," cried Mr. Yates, "and now, something strong-

er and more roomy is needed to contain you both."

"Well, well," retorted Wesley, "how much 'dough' might be required to get astride of that creature? Just for idle foolishness I ask the question, in absence of nothing better to say, but that place must have cost a round fifty thousand. A whole lot of 'dough,' even when thinking of 'spooky old Jackson'."

Yes," replied Mr. Yates, "I understand it cost fifty thousand to fit up the place complete, but adverse circumstances have placed it upon the market at one-half its full cost, and you are the only man who can handle it at that price, and the only one I know of, for whom it is so admirably adapted. You are young and have the time with all necessary adjuncts to completely inhabit the house. Think it over, my fine fellow, go with me and inspect the property, for we can get the caretaker to take us around. I have much curiosity myself to look inside that house and have understood, the old fellow had some very unique ideas in planning and furnishing it. It all goes together, all furnished ready to move into, apparently it is dog cheap at "thirty thousand."

"But," retorted Wesley, "I have not a third of that in available cash."

"Don't mind that now, let's see whether it is something you want, first. Should it prove to be so, you will find a way to finance it, surely it is a much less task than what you have already done hereabouts. Come, let's go up there and see what it is like?"

The property referred to was located up on the most beautiful and sightly location in the city, containing about eight acres of ground, and most beautifully laid out, with every adornment suitable to a gentleman's residence.

The former owner had made his money in the mining of silver, after which he went to Pueblo and found this ideal spot, spending almost the remainder of his life in satisfying his desire, for a beautiful resi-

dence and grounds. After his passing, none of his heirs were equal either in financial or socialistic abilities, to make use of the palace and its environments. It had been upon the market for a long time, but none were found who could or would handle it, thus, here was a happening, "a man wanted a place, a place wanted a man," here was a delightful dilemma, if only the two seemingly available and proper, could be brought together.

As they went over the place and then through the house, many were the exclamations of pleasure and wonder from both. After leaving the grounds, Wesley became deeply engaged in thought and Mr. Yates attempted not to disturb him, as he well knew Wesley was strongly under conviction. A condition when "to be left alone is golden."

After they had returned to the hotel, Wesley at once repaired to his room; here he found himself engulfed in a greatly deeper problem, than any in which he had yet encountered, evidently, the property deal he was considering was at the price asked, a bargain indeed, but was it wise or was it prudent to take over such a burden, true, he had a very large prospective income, and he had the moral right under "the Alliance Compact," to satisfactorily equip himself. Each of the "Alliance Members" enjoyed full liberty, to do that for his own comfort and happines that he desired to do. To purchase a "thirty thousand dollar" piece of property, when he actually was possessed of but "Five Thousand," was, as Jack Loon would say, "a-goin' some, b'gosh."

After musing upon the situation more or less during several of the succeeding days, Wesley resolved to defer making any decision until his own affairs had advanced, and then he decided, "Twenty-five Thousand" is quite as much as I should have in a home. Who am I, that I should launch forth in such grand style, as the owner of that regal estate should do? What will my

people at home think about it and what will my good friends, the Hunts, and the Jacksons, think? Well then, "let's drop it for the present, at least," was his decision.

Matters for the following week or two drifted on. Mr. Yates said nothing further to Wesley regarding the residence property. He had learned that Wesley was a self-contained man, with plenty of ballast.

Four months had passed since Wesley had returned and much had been accomplished at the mines. The tunnel at "the Prohib" had been advanced almost to the shaft. They had crossed another rich vein of ore which also had for a wall, the same kinds of mineral the previous vein had disclosed, the samples of which, that had been taken by the chemist, were found to contain platinum, rutanium, rodium and indium, all believed to be in paying quantities, inasmuch, as the price ranged respectively, from one hundred to three hundred dollars per pound, with the full demand never supplied, and very little even having been discovered within the United States. Here was a factor to be counted upon, and would, if proven to be present in any considerable quantity, greatly eclipse the gold and silver factor. Much excitement had been brought about throughout the whole neighborhood, through the results of that analysis, and great were the expectations of those interested, Wesley being congratulated upon every hand for being born "A lucky Yankee," with nerve sufficient to merit the name.

Wesley was greatly elated at the new find and also, at the rapidity of progress in the construction work. Two weeks more would complete the plant and also the tunnel cutting to "the Prohib" shaft. Then would decide the reliability of the reports, concerning the deposit at bottom of that "prohibition hole," and incidentally, afford a definite lay-out concerning prospective profits, all of which could assist Wesley materially, regarding the purchase of a residence which he felt

that he ought to secure before returning east, for should Basil and Jonas have secured a nice home before returning, he would feel like "thirty cents" when it should become known, that he had not provided a desirable home in which to install his lady, indeed, "Honors were even" at the start and it should not be his to subsequently make them odd, at least unfavorably so.

The day arrived when the last shot in the tunnel working was fired. Immediately the water accumulation in that deep shaft rushed through, in very fact, as an underground river. The workmen had retired, the day's work was finished, when as had been the custom, the fuse was lighted as the men left for the night.

In early morning before the men had arrived for the day's work, Selkirk and Jack together entered the tunnel, which had been well washed by the rapid running water, every little crevice in the floor of the tunnel was completely filled, handfuls of which they scooped up in which was plainly visible much of the shining metal. Jack was the first to speak and it was really a roar.

"Good lordy Harry, Mr. Selkirk, it's enough, it's enough, b'gosh, that settles it, that settles it, the 'real dough' an' plenty of it is here, just as they said it was, b'gosh, hurrah for our 'Yankee boss'."

"Certain sure he is all there," shouted Selkirk, as they proceeded onward to the heading. A hole had been torn through into the shaft about two feet wide and three feet high. At once they entered and with pick-ax tore down some of the wall.

"Dough, dough, great dough," shouted Jack. "My lordy, that's some, did you ever see the beat of that, Mr. Selkirk?"

The men now began to appear, some half a dozen in all, when upon meeting Selkirk and Jack, all sent up a cheer that might have been easily heard at both

the shaft and tunnel entrances, for as one remarked, "That's a great showing, the best ever."

The statements previously made concerning this shaft working, were now fully verified and it was all that had been claimed for it.

Upon reaching the outside, Selkirk at once called the city and got Wesley on the 'phone. When the receiver was placed upon the hook, Wesley and Mr. Yates shouted and embraced each other, waltzing down the hotel hall, and all present betook of the spirit, which made that old hotel speak right out loud, and soon it was all over the city, for this "Prohib hole" had been for years a big factor in the city's gossip, everybody being more or less acquainted with the situation concerning it, and much speculation had been indulged in since Wesley had purchased it.

The papers were full of news concerning it for several days, having fully described "the milling plant" and its unique transportation facilities, as the constructive work had progressed; indeed, this new enterprise and the new methods that were to be employed in its operation, was the talk of the town and county as well. Any story told concerning it was readily believed, while Grundy gossip did spin out some big yarns. The plant was fired up and ready for adjustment trial, about a week after the water had run out of the shaft. A few days were given over to the full adjustment of everything, including the education of the men for their several positions, when the papers announced that "the following Monday, the whole plant will take up business in due course."

The morning train out from the city was a crowded one. There were several hundred of the passengers destined for nowhere, but "The Yankee Mining Company Plant," while the name of the station adjacent had been changed to "Yankee." Thus, in very truth had the people thereabouts been forced to respect, that heretofore despised and insulted name.

Everything so far had worked fairly well. Of course, a few days in actual practice of everyday work will limber up, to work more smoothly than was to be expected at the first. More material came to "the Milling Plant," at first from the "Jackson" having been further developed, but altogether taken, it was pronounced a grand outfit, while much interest was excited in the operation of the tram-work, that being wholly automatic as a gravity proposition and it worked out, as completely as Wesley had calculated. The idea had been Wesley's, but the engineer had worked it out to a practical basis.

After a three-day run, Wesley desired to gather data as to what may be expected upon an average, believing the result of a week's operations at that time, may be considered a minimum in basing his calculations, that the figures taken then may be safe upon which to estimate, the weekly average run when taken permanently.

During the following six days, a pretty good run was made. Sixty tons of ground material was dumped into the mill hopper, with the result that thirty-eight hundred ounces of silver, worth sixty cents per ounce, and five hundred and twenty ounces of gold worth twenty dollars per ounce, had been taken therefrom. When taken altogether, this was considered by all to be a fair estimate of what could be expected. Thus, when the result of the week's run became known, there were in plenty bulged eyes and discredited ears.

The directors of the company had been invited to be present the following week and Selkirk had become so enthusiastic, he had insisted upon his father being present upon that occasion. All the way from Montana he had to come, but come he did, and after witnessing what was there to witness, had become even more enthused than had Selkirk, saying, "Never before have I witnessed anything like that and I doubt if ever its equal has existed," remarking

to the directors, "a live Yankee for me is the real stuff to possess hereafter."

Upon the occasion of the visit of the members of the company, to witness the operation of what had been termed, "The Prohibition-Spook outfit," Mr. Yates had completely spread himself in the collation he served. Quite a large company they were, as in every case the wives had been brought along, as Mr. Graham remarked, "In fact, the women throughout, are quite as much interested in this unusual affair, as are the men." Mrs. Jackson's way of putting it was, "We women, are just simply members of this wonderful Yankee corporation, in good and regular standing."

The day following their arrival was spent out at the plant, and to make the occasion all that it should be, Mr. Yates provided for his hotel cook to go along and serve a dinner, in a nice grove that stood near the milling plant, thus a gala day they had of it. All visited both the mines, and the old people were quite as well entertained with that part of the program, as were the younger portion; in fact, most of them were elderly people. A few personal friends of Mr. Yates and some, that Selkirk and Wesley considered close friends were invited, altogether effecting quite a large party, thus "the Yankee Mining outfit," was now duly and formally christened.

Mr. and Mrs. Hunt were particularly joyous at the success of the enterprise. They somewhat regarded Wesley as their protege, in fact, all of the immediate company present were conversant with the peculiar circumstances, which first led Wesley to sojourn to Pueblo, thus all this had sprung from his flight from Mr. Baker, of the "Denver Gas and Electric Company."

During this assembling of parties in interest, much entertainment was enjoyed from a recital of the incidents, leading up to and resulting from Wes-

ley's rapid departure from Denver. The Hunts, being really the hub upon which all of the events had turned, were accorded the post of honor at the table and elsewhere, where it were pertinent to create such a post.

Mr. Yates had unfolded to the Hunts and Jacksons, the plan he had nursed to have Wesley take over, the residence property upon the hill, describing as near as possible Wesley's attitude toward the proposition, with his reluctancy on account of his environments and circumstances, emphasizing the fact, that he had dared not to approach him further with the matter, fearing he would consider him overofficious.

The old people were much interested in the proposition and expressed a desire to view the premises, so after Wesley and Selkirk had departed for the mines, upon a matter that must promptly receive their attention, Mr. Yates engaged to pilot them across the grounds and over the house, with which they were so greatly delighted, that they all with one accord said to Mr. Yates, "Your efforts are admirable and should continue to a successful finish, while we can be counted upon to assist you in every necessary way."

Wesley and Selkirk returned from the plant in good time for dinner. After dinner, Wesley and his elderly friends were alone together in the private parlor, while Selkirk and his parents had taken a stroll about the city, as Mr. Graham, Senior, had declared he needed exercise to settle his dinner. After conversation in the parlor had waxed lively for awhile, concerning the enterprise that so greatly interested them all, Mrs. Hunt turned the subject by inquiring of Wesley, "May I inquire a bit, Wesley, concerning your plans for settling when you return from the east with the lady in tow? Surely, we are also interested in that phase of your case as well as

the business end. No doubt you have made plans, as all young men are likely to do."

"My dear Mrs. Hunt," replied Wesley. I hardly know just how to reply to that. I have not yet selected 'a cage for my bird' in any definite way and present appearance seem to indicate, that Mr. Yates will have to engage to house and feed us for a while. I have looked about some, but as yet have encountered nothing exactly satisfactory, that is properly available to me. Perhaps my ideas are contained in a swelled head, as many another young scion of this modern day, has for himself undoubtedly discovered."

"Your reply seems to indicate," said Mrs. Hunt, "that there is something that might be satisfactory, if you felt it were within your means. Why not be frank with us, Wesley, we should all certainly appreciate being taken fully into your confidence."

"Yes," added Mrs. Jackson with a broad smile, "do tell us that we may, at least, share in your perplexity."

"Well," replied Wesley with some hesitancy, "I have inspected a property in company with Mr. Yates, that is a perfect thing, built and formerly owned by a wealthy man, but why should I consider it? My pile is indeed a small one, when considering a property that cost sixty thousand dollars to build and equip, and then, what need has a family of two of what might be termed a castle?"

"But," retorted Mrs. Jackson, "you can have no expectation of holding the number down to that, can you?" "Ha, ha, ha," burst forth when Mrs. Hunt added, "of course he cannot. I wager he is not so shiftless as that, now let's have it, whatever is holding you down?"

"Well," was the reply, "the Damon estate up there upon the terrace is on the market, with a price of Thirty Thousand Dollars upon it and I can muster

about two thousand. Some odds that, I reckon, and greatly too much. A year or two later it might appear some different, but I do not think it proper for me to have so much in a residence and would only give Twenty-five Thousand, had I the available cash."

Mr. Jackson here took a hand, inquiring if he would object to placing a mortgage upon it, if a deal could be arranged.

"No," replied Wesley, "I think Fifteen Thousand could be raised upon it."

"Well, then," spoke up Mr. Hunt, "the thing seems dead easy. I will loan you Five Thousand, and I believe Mr. Jackson will do the same; if you can purchase it for Twenty-five Thousand your way appears clear."

"Yes, yes," cried Mr. Jackson, "that's fixed it, now hasn't it? Now I'll tell you, my boy, in company with Mr. Yates we have been all over the place. He has told us that you appeared to like it, but so far as he could determine, you had not solved the problem as to whether you could or ought to own it. He greatly desires that you should have it and we all, are certain it is a bargain at the price asked, now, why not get busy at once, and if possible, secure it while we are here present? I assure you it will give us much pleasure to know it is in your possession before we depart, and we will prolong our stay a day or two to congratulate you. It is certainly a fitting place for you. You have acquired by your own sagacity and effort, a position that fully warrants the possession of a property of that class. Within a year you will be quite able to clear it of all encumbrance, for you hold the earning power that can do it."

"How ever," cried Wesley, "can I repay all that you good people have done and are proposing to do, what has instigated you to put over all that you are

doing, it is so very unusual? The world at large is not acting thus, were it so doing, heaven would be present here, no other place would be mentioned."

"Wesley, my boy," exclaimed Mr. Hunt. "it is unusual, but is prompted from the fact that you are unusual. Were everyone as open and frank, as persevering and straightforward, the world would extend the kind hand, but the selfishness and intrigue of man as usually exhibited, forbid such kindness and confidence as has been wont to come your way. Whatever you may have received, has been but a premium placed upon your conduct and personality, and yet, the world is under further obligation and will always be to such as you."

After the pleasant interview before described, Wesley approached Mr. Yates with the proposition to offer Twenty-five Thousand for the "Damon property," adding, "I will give that for it and get them the cash."

Mr. Yates opened his eyes wide with the smiling reply, "You're it," my boy. I well knew you would get there. You know a good thing when you see it, and many people do not. I knew well enough that one who could handle a set of spooks, could find a way to handle that 'Damon estate,' so my boy, I am heartily glad."

The offer was duly made for the property and was promptly accepted. Thus ere another full day had passed, matters in conveyance had all been completed. The second day thereafter the Hunts and Jacksons had witnessed Wesley in possession of his future home and departed for their own homes, completely satisfied with the part they had taken in all the proceedings, happily declaring they should be present at Wesley's reception, when he should return with his bride.

The following day after the departure of these

elderly friends, Wesley, Selkirk and his father, spent at the plant in going through matters of operation in detail, Mr. Graham handing out much information that could be and should be made use of. The next day Mr. Graham and lady departed for home, and Wesley for his home in the east.

CHAPTER VIII

BASIL'S TRIUMPH

After seeing his friends off for the west, Basil commenced right away to pull matters together. First, he must visit the bankers who had the bond sale in charge, to determine where the treasury of the Urban Railway Company was at. Soon he had met or communicated with several of them and learned that the bonds had all been subscribed. One banker remarking "wish we had as many more to place." Next Basil repaired to the engineer's office, to ascertain what progress had been made in the construction work, finding that the roadbed was nearly complete, he then got in communication with the several supply men, to learn if they were going to be in on theirs within contract time. In every case the reports were satisfactory, all had progressed quite up to the letter of the contract.

The second day, and after the whole situation had been looked into, Basil planned to have the engineer go over the line with him by team from Enderton. As they proceeded along the route, Basil, was almost beside himself with wonder and amazement at his own accomplishments. "All this," he mused, "I am responsible for, as every stake driven was at my instigation. How- ever could I have been selected the agency that has brought all this to pass, when but a young man having had no experience in this line and, in fact, little experience in anything of a commercial character, truly, there must have been some kind fate guiding and assisting me. Who shall tell me, then, that man is all sufficient within himself? Who, indeed, can say that Basil Carter could pull all this together through blundering about hither and yon? Shall anyone believe that were pos-

sible, he must not attempt to convince Basil Carter that fate has not decreed the direction that his feet should tread, and what is fate, but the will of "The Creator of all Things?"

When reaching the power plant at Pond-Grove, Basil was more than ever dazed at results culminating, from his first attempt at the purchase of this property. Here, the structure was awaiting the coming of the ponderous machinery and this was due to arrive the following week, when it was said that thirty days thereafter would be required to set and fasten it. Therefore, it appeared that in about six weeks everything would be complete for the running of cars over the road, at first, as construction vehicles, which they said might need three or four weeks to properly ballast and adjust the operating devices. Thus, Basil could believe that by midsummer it would become a full-fledged child and fully out of its swaddling clothes, with the traffic of people and freight astride of its back and earning money for him and his "Alliance". Here, a thought entered his mind concerning his associates, wondering had they found in their special lines as satisfactory progress having been made, were they as nearly equipped for an earning basis as is this, "The Urban Railway Company?" and smiled.

After looking about until midafternoon, Basil decided to have the engineer return alone, while he would procure a team and driver to take him to the gate of "Darius Green." As there was nothing that immediately demanded his attention in the city, he could easily spend a few days with these good people, perhaps to their mutual advantage. It was his delight to go and he flattered himself that it would be their delight to receive and visit with him. Soon they were off, with the driver greatly elated at the prospect of a nice chat with the president of the "Railway Company." Basil had received much at-

tention from the people all along the railroad route, the engineer had introduced him to all that had come in their way, while each one had taken occasion to drop some sentence, conveying their gratitude to him for the placing of that railroad among them, generally making it appear that their real and important wonder was how and by what means, he had worked "Darius Green" to get possession of that franchise. All had been familiar with the unsuccessful attempt made by others to obtain it, and knowing he had been very obstinate about it from some cause or other, they also knew his was a personality that was difficult to reckon with, especially if one attempted to badly cross him. They became no wiser, however, through their intimations, for Basil surely had nothing on the old man.

It was about dusk when they arrived at the "Green" gate and supper was all served, when Mrs. Green was heard to scream from the back door, "Come here quick, Darius Green, come here, I say. The prodigal verily has returned and don't forget to bring along the 'fatted calf'."

"What in the world are you screaming about, mother?" was roared forth from somewhere in the rear, "what do you want any 'calves' for, have you gone luny, b'gum?"

Basil was now at the front door pounding away at the old-fashioned knocker. Soon it was opened by mother, upon the broad grin and screaming, "Come in, come in, you prodigal son of the Green family, I have already ordered the 'fatted calf.' How are you and how went the battle at home, did the sweetheart remain true and does peace reign throughout? My goodness, but I am glad to see you. Darius and I have talked of little else since you left, you did not bring the lady along, and why, how could you leave her behind?"

"Hold your ballast, Mother Green, the talking machine is becoming unruly, so many questions have been

put already that I am greatly in arrears and can never catch up, unless a 'danger signal' is displayed."

"Ha, ha, ha," was pealing through the doorway, when "Darius Green with his laughing machine," came flying through the hallway screen.

"Well, well, here we are once again," shouted Darius. "My gaddy, but you are a sight good for anybody's sore eyes. A miraculous miracle you are, and of the true 'Yankee type.' They have always told me to meet 'A Yankee' was novel and grand, but 'to know him well, was princely sublime.' Now that we have you once again, we're bound to celebrate privately, but when the first carload of folks goes over that road, there'll be the durndest celebration these old hills ever gazed down upon, since Injuns owned that valley down there, and should they happen back just to take a look at their old pride to find it so desecrated and abused, your young scalp wouldn't be worth enough to your gracious skull to protect it from catchin' a pipein' cold, but lad, you have raised the dickens in a mighty short space o' time. However did you manage to git sech a move on? Land alive, never before did anything pass up that valley at that dog-goned happy gait, why, you'll have 'em all on wheels down there in a week or two. I've been watchin' 'em all along and spent about half my worthless time around down there, imaginin' I had a lot o' errands in one or more o' the villages, an' when I got there couldn't think o' a dog-goned thing I wanted, so just stood and gasped with mouth stretched from ear to ear, a thinkin' what a 'durned shiftless concern' Darius Green is and always has been. Good lordy, guess if you never'd been born, they'd never have celebrated any railroads under that 'Darius Green Franchise,' so there's where your worthy parents come in for glory in this affair and they've got to be present when that opening celebration comes off, for I just want to meet 'em and inform 'em about the 'great tidings' they added to this

old world, when they caused you to appear. My lordy, that'll be a great day for 'Darius and Mother Green,' when they can shake with such good old New England stock as that pair must be. Good lordy, but they orter raised a big brood from the pattern they had to work from."

Supper was finished and the men were comfortably seated upon the veranda, and mother had about completed the clearing away, when out through the evening twilight came the muffled sound of a distant drum, which instantly caused the old man's ears to become alert. Presently he spoke out, "That's not down in one of the villages, that's nearer than that and by gaddy, I b'lieve it's a comin' nearer. Say, mother, we're goin' to be serenaded, I verily believe it, now my lad prepare yourself to make a speech, they're a comin' here sure as there's a huckleberry a growin' on these hills; say boy, they've found out you're here and are a goin' ter celebrate yer aforehand. There, yer can see the light just through that air dingle there. Yes, truly ther're a comin' mother, can yer treat 'em? What can yer git to go with a keg o' cider? I can find the cider, can you find anything ter chew on? Basil's got ter talk to 'em, an' we've got ter treat 'em, so let's git a move on right away."

Sure enough, they were coming and mother sprung for the larder. She had some good things to offer, but she wanted another some, and quickly calling one of the farmhands, bid him run quickly across to Mrs. Jones. "Tell her what's a goin' to happen and tell her she must help me out with anything that's good ter eat, except 'doughnuts and cheese and punkin' pie.' I've got plenty of them things, and do be quick fer the Philistines are a comin' for us right smart, tell her ter come along with the feed and you pack it across, lively, too, we hain't got a blessed minute to spare a hangin' around."

Darius had rolled up from the cellar a twenty gal-

lon keg of cider, when Basil remarked, "there seems to be music in different directions, it sounds off here, too."

Darius listened a minute, "Sure as guns, my lordy, that's over on the north road, they're a comin' from two different villages, by lordy, they are, guess mother'll git swamped this time. Wonder what she's a doin' about it, they'll be a deuce of a crowd, don't know as we can feed 'em, by lordy, I don't—and I don't—and I, Darius Green, don't want 'em to go away hungry and say, 'for once Uncle Darius couldn't make good.' "

Mother was busy and when told that there were two separate crowds comin', she got busier. Mrs. Jones had sent over her girl in advance to help and say, that Mrs. Jones was a comin' with a big lot of apple dumplings newly made that day, for the purpose o' havin' somethin' on hand when she got out and needed 'em, and she's got "five huckleberry pies" and some "punkin' jellup" that she's been a cookin' up for next winter, with a large jar o' "tomarter-ketch-up," two good-sized cold "boiled hams," a "jerk o' dried beef," and if needed, might add a "few dozen crullers," with a "chunk o' cheese," an' three or four punkin' pies, but you sent word that you didn't want sech things.

"Good lordy," screamed mother, "I want anything and everything I can lay my hands on, they say the whole valley is a vomitin' itself up to 'Darius Green's,' an' a comin' from several different ways ter onct, hundreds on 'em, so now, Katura, you just jump back home and tell ma all what yer know and a good deal what yer think yer know, and let no weeds sprout under them big feet afor' yer git back here. If ma can't bring all them things, tell pa to git busy right quick and ter onct too, fer them saranaders won't wait very long after the speechifin' is done, before them bellies will begin to assert their rights after a marchin' out here

to this wilderness. I'll have time, I reckon, ter cook a lot o' corn cakes, and simmer some molasses for a 'syrup.' "

"Well mother, how yer a makin' out. They'll be here in about twenty minutes," remarked Mr. Green.

"It's up ter Basil and you, 'Darius Green,' " retorted mother, "to hold 'em quiet with speech-making for a half hour after they git here, then we women will have suthin' to feed 'em with. I've enlisted Mrs. Jones and Katura and we'll serve 'em up within an hour, so they'll be glad to come again."

The sound of the music was now much nearer and the torchlights were to be seen, as they appeared approaching the junction of the north and east road, where it probably had been planned that the two delegations should meet, this being about half a mile from the "Green homestead." From the Junction they would be in sight all the way, thus Basil and Mr. Green ascended to the front chamber to get an idea, if possible, of about how many the procession contained.

As the music was now nearly approaching the house, the rear of the procession was just leaving the Junction, so here was, indeed, a big crowd to entertain, and Darius believed it could not possibly be well and sufficiently done.

Basil had given some thought toward an assembly of topics upon which to address them, not purposing to be lengthy, however; as it was not a formal occasion very much would not be expected.

When nearing the house, cheering commenced, that rang true all the way down the line, red fire and rockets plentifully lighted the night, causing even the animals of the farmyard to sit up and take notice, all of which spurred the women to greater endeavor, and before the eaters were ready, the feed had been plentifully and royally prepared, with Katura and the farmhand, lending much aid in providing the benches and laying the food.

When the procession had focused itself upon the large lawn, some eight to nine hundred heads in all, a cheer for "Basil Carter, the railroad Magnate," rang forth loud and true, then another for "Darius Green, the political Machine." When silence reigned supreme, Basil stepped out upon the veranda, waved his hand, smiling a broad smile, and when about to speak, another cheer arose and the bands struck up, "Oh, hain't I glad I come."

Basil then gave them a twenty-minute speech, the first he had ever delivered since leaving his college, but it was said to be a capital one and decidedly pertinent to the occasion; when concluding, cheers again peeled forth.

Darius then arose and inquired of the crowd, if they were foolish enough to expect him to open his meat chopper, when cries of, "Yes, yes, give us a dose of 'the next political scheme' to be put over. We're always ready for your politics, whatever you may have to dump upon us."

"Ha, ha, ha," cried the old man, "how many of you vote his way and how many of you don't know which way you do vote and don't know which way you want to? The 'political nimcompoop' during later years has multiplied so rapidly, that the poor rabbit has retired from business in shame. The poor creature who for ages has held the record for progeny, and is the least liable of all creation to commit error through race suicide. Truly you cannot expect the man who knows 'nothin' ' to say 'somethin',' for that would be a case of attemptin' to obtain 'somethin' from nothin',' and nobody really believes that the thing can be done, but I firmly believe that 'somethin' can be obtained for somethin' ' and that a laborer is always worthy of his hire is quite beyond question, therefore renderin' a service that is worthy of compensation, thus, we shall attempt to prove that 'somethin' is realy worth 'somethin',' that for your labor you shall receive substantial

hire and instead of attemptin' to create 'a political rally,' from out of what was projected to be a 'demonstration of gratitude,' for blessings at hand and to come, through the God-given agency of 'Basil Carter.' (Cheers) We now invite you to the yard in the rear, where you may fall to, at whatever it has pleased our 'kind neighbors' to send along. May it do you all good, through physical inspiration, during all the long way back to your happy firesides. Let me add, that we fully appreciate and honor the high regard you have so elaborately exhibited, for the efforts that have been expended in providin' a railroad for the convenience and comfort of 'Old Urban Valley.' Now if you please, mother is awaitin' your comin' to the 'feast of plenty.' " Then the band again peeled forth, "Oh yes, I'm glad I come," while the crowd gathered around the festive board, as jolly a crowd as ever gathered around a keg of cider and a farmer's lunch.

This was an occasion long to be remembered and verily was long remembered by Basil Carter, as his first public reception. "Truly, indeed," Basil remarked, "the honor bestowed upon Mr. Green and my self by your presence and enthusiasm upon this delightful occasion, is sufficient compensation for all and more than we have accomplished, and would to God every one could be as liberally rewarded for service rendered." Then three especially rousing cheers rang forth for the youthful promoter and political grandpa of the Urban Valley railroad, which was the grand goodnight of the occasion, as the delighted guests disappeared down the roadway.

On the morrow at breakfast, Mr. and Mrs. Green could hardly contain themselves, so elated were they at what had occurred. As mother expressed it, "I never expected when I married you, Darius Green, to become actually notorious, and now, I can appreciate somethin' of the true and embarrassin' feelin's of the first lady of the land and can sympathize with her, in

a creditable and contrite spirit, whenever she may have come in upon her unexpectedly, such an enormously hungry and hilariously disposed assembly of people."

The second day of Basil's stay with the Greens, it was planned to have "The Pair" take them all a pace up and down the valley, especially to spend some time around the power house, and in planning out improvements to be made in and around the grove and pond.

Basil had told them of his expectations as to passenger traffic for the summer months. The big city, he believed, would spend much of its time in a properly equipped and well-ordered picnic and boating rendezvous; the distance being but about sixteen miles to the pond and grove, a fare of twenty cents could bring them there to spend the day. This with the nice ride it afforded them would make the traffic heavy. The sizeable lake they had would afford good boating and with a nice line of amusements in the grove, it would supply a better outing place than any now existent in that vicinity, and commercially speaking, he believed it would be a valuable adjunct to the regular everyday traffic. Basil had with him a list of entertainments and devices, with a blue print of a full layout which the engineer had executed and given him.

Mr. Green was much impresed with what Basil had to show and tell them. Mother, could not be expected to fully comprehend all, that this part of the program would contribute to the proposition as a commercial factor, but Mr. Green could see the wisdom of catering to the picnic element and advised Basil, to pull every attraction possible for the pond and grove, to make it the best outing place available to the big city.

It was quite some after dark when they arrived home. Basil planned to remain three or four days longer, when he must return to Enderton to establish the offices of "The Urban Valley Railroad Company,"

which it had been decided to locate there. Moreover, it behooved him to get busy upon the proposition to locate a home for himself, as should he be obliged to build one, several months would be required.

Regarding the matter of a home, Basil talked frankly with Mr. and Mrs. Green. There was one location in Enderton that had especially attracted Basil's attention, but it probably was not available, as an "ancient gambrel roofed house" stood upon it, quite likely inhabited by an old couple, whose abode it always had been and would continue to be so long as they continued. This property stood at the end of and facing a long public green, with a roadway upon each side and beautiful rows of maples upon either side of the roadways, the residences upon both sides being exceptional, even for a country city of about twenty thousand people, and each inhabitant seemed to vie with his neighbors, in the line of making the best possible appearance of his buildings and lawn.

This old property at the end of the green was quite some raised above the general level of the surface thereabouts, beautiful shade was present on the front and both sides, while the view from the rear was exceptionally fine, looking toward the big city. Basil spoke of this property to his hosts, when mother exclaimed: "The most beautifully located house in the whole town, I have tried to have Darius sell out the farm and move in to Enderton, to spend the rest of our time here on earth, and he said he would if he could get that Hutter Place, but he knew he was safe in saying that, for it is probably impossible to get them to move out."

Mr. Green remarked that he had despaired of ever getting that, but added that he didn't blame Basil for takin' a shine to it, as it is a perfectly proper place for him to own, now that he practically owns the railroad, and who better than a railroad

magnate should occupy the best location in town? "Good lordy, Basil, you ought to have it for that Jay-nice of yours. Perhaps you can frame up a suitable proposition to tempt the Hutters, perhaps you could buy some nice cosy place to offer them, in some sort of exchange for theirs."

"How are they fixed financially?" inquired Basil.

"Fairly well to do," said Darius, "they rent the land in the rear and with a little other income, they manage to get on in a modest way that seems to satisfy them at their age."

Basil and Mr. Green arranged that "The Pair," should take them to Enderton on the morrow, when they might look about the city to see what could be found, that they should decide would appeal to the Hutter people in exchange.

Mr. Green had read several advertisements of property for sale in Enderton, so they would look those up first. One that appeared to be more suitable than any other would cost four thousand to purchase. It was a nice little place of about a half acre of ground, with a large lawn and a comparatively new house of eight rooms, all well shaded, with nice environments, and well down the street from the present home of the Hutters.

Basil decided to take a thirty-day option upon this property, depositing fifty dollars to secure it, after which he and Mr. Green rode down to the Hutter place, and without approaching the house, took a jaunt around the property which they estimated to contain about five acres, most of which showed excellent growing crops upon it.

Basil accosted the man at work in the field and learned, that he was the lessee of the tillage land and that his lease was renewed annually, thus it would expire with the year, so here was really no handicap, for should Basil get the property, he would not care for the land in tillage during the

present year. Nothing was said to this man indicating their real purpose in making this call.

After having encircled the tract complete, it was decided that it was best for Basil to alone approach the old people, that perhaps Mr. Green's presence might make it awkward, as the Hutters might know who he was and might be unfriendly, through some political action put over by "the machine boss" at some time or other. Who can tell when "a machine politician" will or will not, consciously or unconsciously tread upon any man's corns in fact or imagination? Thus Mr. Green sauntered along down the cross street to where "The Pair" had been tethered.

Basil took a dignified stride toward the Hutter house, and reaching the door, he several times threw over the old-fashioned knocker. No response coming, quickly he strolled around to the rear door, when down a way in the garden a sunbonnet of the "Old Mother Hubbard type," was just visible about some rose bushes, and for that sunbonnet he made a stride, but looking the opposite way was "the sunbonnet," its wearer having little idea of the approach of a gentleman, until attracted by a "Goodmorrow salute" in a laughing, gentlemanly manner, when the sunbonnet quickly turned with a loud chuckle emanating from beneath its folds, "Land sakes" my young friend, but you frightened me not. Once, a young swain of your appearance might have caused a faint, but "land alive," that was afore I ever met Ubed Hutter, for he couldn't make a snail faint for there wasn't any a comin' his way, and the good Lord knows he never could overtake one."

"Well, mother," exclaimed Basil, "you're a farmer I take it, and a good one as well, with the evidence here present to judge from. The result of your persistent effort is laughing at you from every quarter, truly, this is a most delightful spot to find oneself in and you must greatly enjoy all these nice

shrubs and flowers, but with all this land, craving man's laborious attention, I imagine your betterhalf must of necessity, be a hard worker as well as his bonnie lassie."

"Now you are coursing away off the true taper, young man, for that 'whilom better half, does nothing but hold his tired old chair down and study politics out o' the newspapers, most of his breath being expended in a cussin' 'Darius Green' and 'his political machine,' and I'm not a sayin' however, that he is not a workin' on a righteous job. Land sakes alive, we're just a gitten what we'd a' orter had and would a' had several years ago, but for 'Darius Green's cussedness', in a tyin' hard and double knots in it."

"To what do you refer, may I ask," queried Basil, "is this community suffering from some needed improvement, that one man was able to hold up, if so, through what magic did he obtain the power? Do not the people rule in matters of public improvement?"

"Well," replied Mrs. Hutter, "my best way to answer, I think will be to inform you, that when a few years older you will know all and more than you believe you know now. The magic you refer to is dead easy, politics, simply politics, rotten ones at that, then, don't the people rule? Oh yes, when 'Darius Green' and others of his ilk tell 'em how to, but here we are a talkin' away like old crones out here in this hot sun. Let's adjourn to the house where we can take it comfortable. If you have come to see Mr. Hutter you may have to abide some while. He went over to t'other side near two hour ago, and orter got back afore this, but I tell him many times a week, he's the most unreliable critter I ever imagined could be got up at the time o' the creation. He can only be counted on to eat and sleep at the proper time. At other times his trolley is more likely to be off

the wire or out of repair. Pray tell me, if you please, do you b'long hereabouts when you're to home?"

"No," replied Basil, "my home is in New England. I am strolling about down this way, in fact, may yet come this way to live, have taken an option on a very pretty place over the other side. Now that there is to be a nice 'trolley road' through here, think it will be a pleasant place to live, having some business in the big city occasionally."

"What place have you in mind here?" asked Mrs. Hutter.

"Jenkins' place," replied Basil, "on Oak Avenue."

"Oh, my," cried the lady, "that is just a dear. I have tried to have my Ubed think that way, too, as I would be so happy in that little cosy place. Really, it's too bad that places and folks that are most fittin' to each other can't fit, because there's a human bein' some way connected, that'll allers put a foot in the dough before it's completely rose. Ubed thinks he was created on a puppus to live in this old shack and then to die here, too, but I'm contrary minded as to that."

"Would you, Mrs. Hutter, exchange this ancient old landmark for a nice modern home, would you have no compunction at leaving this old stamping ground of yours for so many long years?" smilingly asked Basil.

"It is this way," replied the other, "I've never had much change a during my life, especially since I up and married Ubed Hutter and I'm a thinking that 'twould do me good to have a little. I'm already a figgerin' it out, to let them trolley cars cart me about some when they begin to trolley, and whether Ubed is along or no won't make very much difference. I'm a goin' and if I knew enough to bring it about, I'd strike a bargain with somebody to swap my home to git another change that way, but don't s'pose that

this old ancient would appeal to anybody, that had anything better for affordin' a change."

"Would you, Mrs. Hutter, be willing to exchange this for the Jenkins place, if it could be satisfactorily brought about?"

"Yes I would," cried mother, "and mighty quick, too. But Ubed, land sakes, don't suppose he—"

"What's that, mother, about Ubed, guess I've caught you at it a finally, arter all these long years of domestic felicity. Ha, ha, ha," roared Mr. Ubed Hutter, as he strode into the room.

"Well," retorted mother, "I have to own I have a very entertainin' caller an' we've enjoyed a very pleasant chat. I would introduce him had I learned his name."

"I am Mr. Basil Carter from old New England," cried Basil, "just at present straying about this neighborhood in quest of what I may find, and accidentally strolled in to inspect your fine garden and found the lady and 'the sunbonnet,' very agreeable company and staid on until you had opportunity to to catch us at 'it.' "Ha, ha, ha," roared they all.

So here Basil had the ice well broken and the woman already in with him. With the ace and the queen already in hand, he figured he should in some way be able to acquire the deuce, but he well knew from what he had learned, that more than one session would be necessary to play the game through.

After a pleasant chat, during which his option had been brought up and discussed somewhat, Basil took a friendly leave with the old man and lady, who were very urgent for him to repeat his call, as the old man put it, "and come when I'm ter home, too," adding that "I'm most allers ter hum afternoon."

"Yes," cried mother, "when you are not a gaddin' for more news, but Mr. Carter, I shall hope to see you, when perhaps you may help me out on some of my plans, as I shall dream dreams I'm afraid."

"What underground wire yer got er goin' now, mother, to bring topsy-turvy out of a peaceful situation?"

Basil found Mr. Green asleep in the buggy with "The Pair" all tethered. He untethered them and led them out into the road, when the motion of the vehicle awoke the old man. "Whoa, there, whoa, there, whoa," shouted he, when Basil roared, "Wake up, wake up, old man, and hear the birds sing, for quite a pretty song have they learned today. Ah, ah, my good friend, the game is in the works and I already hold the ace and the queen. The deuce I am certain to acquire, and what do you know about all of that? Another session is necessary, however, perhaps two." Then he told the old man about the happenings that had happened.

"By gum, Basil, a mighty good session that, you and the woman together will win out all right. 'Yankee molasses' spreads on easy down this way and here is a Yankee that well knows how to spread it, by gum, he does. Ha, ha, ha, but they don't especially well like 'Darius Green,' ha, ha, that's a good joke, too, but we knew just enough to keep Darius out of that dish and until you git 'em fast, he must be kept well in the background, and you must get this matter closed before they realize it is 'us' that is building this railroad, for they will couple us together in that and your chances of a deal will be greatly lessened. But I must be going now, 'The Pair' will hardly get me home by supper time, but I will meet you at any time for any puppus, an' when I can be of service just don't be bashful in advisin'."

"No, Mr. Green, we fully understand each other regarding such things."

Basil decided to return to the big city that night and return again to Enderton the following week, when he expected the Hutters would have done some threshing upon the exchange deal. He felt

secure in the old lady's ability, supported by her anxiety to acquire a change from ancient to modern. To round up the old man, he believed, however, that he would naturally prove an obstinate obstruction for a while at least, but he also believed that he could bring forth a bit of diplomacy to counteract some of the old man's silly objections. Basil hoped another interview would accomplish his purpose, but was prepared to inaugurate a siege if necessary. He knew time to be a grand and wonderful healer of all ills and had upon several former occasions, bided his time with all necessary patience to the accomplishment of his purpose.

In the big city the next day, Basil employed his time in calling upon all his business acquaintances. With some he had business, others to make a short social call, thus to keep in good touch against a time, when it might prove to be an advantage to know these people.

The bankers who had placed the bonds were all exceedingly friendly, as one expressed it, upon being thanked by Basil for the several kind courtesies accorded him: "You, my dear sir, are under no obligation to us, we are the debtors, you provided a way to help us to help ourselves and we should be only too pleased to have you make another break, even though it might be as the papers at first characterized your other, 'An amateur folly in finance,' another way of putting high finance, but," added the banker, "nobody can understand how and by what sort of tactics, you were able to conquer that 'old political hard shell.' The president of 'the Traction Company' was in a day or two ago and said, you must possess some magnetic element in your natural make-up, to have so completely obtained control of 'Darius Green,' that the trait essential to handle that man never could be acquired."

"Yes," replied Basil, "I think he is right about that, and the elements that make up that trait, are but

nature's best endowments to mankind. Darius Green needed nothing through which to convey his sincere friendship, but confidence, established by open-hearted, straight-forward, guileless conduct. To approach Darius Green in a manner in imitation of his own brusk way of meeting people, is dead easy and certain of satisfactory results. I think the whole trouble had arisen primarily at the manner of their approach. They were a bit lofty, a good deal reserved, and some artful, all of which are foes to confidence. One sentence born and bred in frankness will overcome a deal of suspicion, one sentence couched in reserve, will produce doubt and even animosity. I first met Mr. Green at his barn door, he at once tumbled at me like a thousand bricks as to why I was present, undoubtedly believing I had come as others had, to attempt the separation of himself from his cherished and valuable franchise. Thus, what may have been his surprise, when I tumbled back at him like several thousand of brick, never once alluding to the object of my call, and which never was alluded to until he dragged it out, after we had railed at each other more or less for several hours; even then I kept my distance regarding it, until he had fairly well brought out all the facts and information concerning it, while now, I have but to intimate a desire, to gain accomplishment in anything he is able to do."

"Mr. Carter," exclaimed the banker, "there are others that need only an intimation to hop and skip in your service. You have indeed made good, in fact, you are all there, and few there are in active business, having themselves so thoroughly under control and can so easily adapt themselves to emergencies as they shall suddenly arise. We certainly hope you will discover another 'Darius Green,' having an opportunity upon which to exercise your abundant ability, to cope with any and all odds that human nature can place in your way."

A week had passed since Basil had parted with his "Hutter friends," thus he decided to again work their way. A week should suffice to get some sort of decision regarding that property exchange.

Basil again took the engineer along, as some plan he had concerning the amusement lay-out at the park, would require his professional services for a few days.

Arriving at Enderton, Basil at once procured a team and proceeded to the park. He would brook no delay in anything that pertained to full completion of the road and its adjuncts, believing that personal matters, if necessary, could wait.

The outing season was near at hand. Thus to get the most of that season, rapid must be the progress of whatever was necessary to entertain the patrons of his road, while in the big city he had ordered several things in that line to be immediately forwarded, thus in a comparatively short time he could have them placed, and as the equipment for the road itself, was nearly all either present or in transit, they could now set a day for the opening, and the day named was June the tenth, when all endeavors were bent to that end.

It was now the last week in May and things had to hustle. Basil would not fail to make good for any old thing, thus he intended to remain directly upon the job.

The first night he stopped at a hotel near the grove and was out with the engineer soon after six in the morning. He planned to return to Enderton that night, for that property deal was ever upon his mind. He was due to return to New England in early September, and he greatly wanted his home finished before leaving, while three months was necessary to construct in a proper manner, the structure he desired to have as his home. A secret pride was present in Basil's bosom, to place his Janice in as good a home as did his "Alliance Associates" place their consorts.

About five o'clock Basil took the team to drive to

Enderton, when upon arriving, at once repaired to the dining-room, and a little after seven o'clock, again played with that old brass knocker upon the Hutters' front door. Upon this occasion, however, no sunbonnet appeared, it was the old man himself who answered the knock.

"Ah, how are you, Mr. Hutter," smilingly exclaimed Basil, "how are all the folks and the babies as well?" Seeing the old man hesitate, he added, "Don't you know me or don't you want to, guess you had better invite me in where you can take a better look. I am the same old chap, not a doctor with a fat bill to collect, not the sheriff to serve upon you papers of commitment, not the evil one to sacrifice your substance, and—"

"What's all this, Ubed Hutter?" almost screamed Mrs. Hutter. "Why have you not shown that you can be decent enough to invite a stranger in, before all this long time of doorstep agony? Basil Carter, is it you? Indeed it is. I thought your voice was a familiar one, but was in the kitchen and didn't hear very plain, but you, Ubed Hutter, should have known better."

"Hold on there, mother, let me git one word in edgeway or some t'other way, you must be tired and need a rest. Really, I didn't know this young chap, never see him but once and can't remember everybody. Well, well, my boy, come in and we'll place a mark on you that we can know next time you come. When did you git into town?"

"Oh, just arrived an hour ago, have been to 'the big city' since we met," explained Basil. "How have you progressed in health since you were so much disturbed by that Yankee caller? Surely, you were fortunate that he did not longer remain, to tax your patience and get on your nerves." "Ha, ha, ha," was the chorus.

Soon Mrs. Hutter exclaimed, "No, no, Mr. Carter, it is not you that severely tries my patience and has

about wrecked my nerves, it is Ubed Hutter that works that lamentable trick. At times I can't do anything with him. I don't want to say anything that I shall ever regret later, but he does try me so. Generally some of the gallant remains with a man, I reckon, into good old age, but Ubed Hutter seems to have dropped some of his soon after the honeymoon, and it's been continually a droppin' ever since, until now there is not a whole lot available to drop. Most any man would delight in placin' 'his best girl' in a satisfyin' home and I reckon they, as a rule delight in affordin' them all and every pleasure possible, but—"

"Hold on again, mother," retorted Ubed, "it's time to sing the next hymn, addresses that are too lengthy lose most o' their flavor, for there's a limit to the average memory an' you've already reached the limit on mine, an' I guess Mr. Carter has stood about all he can take without a hymn to relieve the strain."

"Mr. Carter can speak for himself," cried mother, "while as he appears more amused than annoyed, I think we'll omit the hymn and instead, inform him of what he might like to know concerning your obstinacy against my sincere wishes. Mr. Carter, I can't do anything with him concernin' the exchange that is so dear to my heart, he simply will be a mule anyway, and what is that other name they sometimes apply to animals of that particular brand."

"Ha, ha, ha," roared they all, when Basil inquired: "Why don't you toss up a penny when you cannot otherwise agree, if either is too obstinate that will settle any difficulty."

"The fact is," retorted Mr. Hutter, "I don't want to give up this old stampin' ground and have to get used to another, for about the time I've done that they'll want to box me up, a sayin' the world hain't got no more use fer old Ubed Hutter. So what's it all amount ter anyhow?"

"Why just to please your 'best girl'," replied Basil.

"An' you, too, I reckon," retorted the old man, "well, I can't help it if I am ugly."

"But what do you call this property worth, Mr. Hutter? I simply ask to get an idea of values down this way."

"Oh," replied the old man, "I really don't know, the old house hain't wuth much to anybody but me. Why, I s'pose the whole thing as it stands, not including mother, would be wuth to sell about four thousand dollars. I was once offered somethin' better than three thousand about a year ago, I think, and I reckon the railroad a comin' adds several hundred, an' if the town grows in consequence, it may afore I leave it rise in value to five thousan'."

"You are acquainted, I suppose, with the Jenkins place?" inquired Basil.

"Oh yes, mother took me over there the other day. It's a good little place an' good enough for me an' mother, all right, but it's partin' with old associations that hurts an' I'm a stickler for anything that's carried me safely along."

"Then," retorted Basil, "why not apply that to your 'best girl?' Indeed, she has stood by you as well as this old house. As for me, I can find other places you know, Mr. Hutter, so do not count at all upon pleasing me. It was Mrs. Hutter's 'best interests' that mostly interested me, but as it is becoming late, for old people especially, I must bid you goodnight."

"Are you to remain in town long?" inquired Mr. Hutter.

"A few days probably," replied Basil, "may call again before I take permanent leave."

"Do so," cried the old man, "sorry you can't stay about permanently, as one don't make agreeable new friends every day."

Some time after Basil had retired and fallen asleep, a rushing of feet in the hall awakened him and he heard the cry of "fire." Looking out of the window a

crowd were rushing past toward the south part of the town. He could not see much light, but the fire department was just rounding the corner at the next cross street. Basil finally decided to dress and saunter forth to see what might be seen. When out upon the street he learned the whole story, for plainly in view, looking through the long park, he saw, in very truth, "the Hutter home" in a cloud of smoke with fire bursting forth from one gable. Truly, it was the home in which he had but a few hours before been quietly conversing, but now was a quiet home no longer. He ran rapidly down the street and soon after reaching the vicinity of the fire, he beheld Mr. and Mrs. Hutter in the dooryard of one of their neighbors. Approaching them, Mrs. Hutter screamed, "Mr. Carter, Mr. Carter, come directly here, is not this awful, awful, to be thus dumped into the street by a merciless conflagration?"

"Yes, yes, Mrs. Hutter," replied Basil, "but you are not dumped into the street by any means, for a home is yours to immediately repair to. The 'Jenkins house' is open to you and it is fairly well furnished. There will probably be not much of value left here after this kotow, so let me escort you hither, will you not?"

"Yes," replied the old man, "we've got to go somewhere now and not talk about old associations, either."

"You are quite welcome," cried Basil, "and I trust you can make yourselves comfortable."

"We shall appreciate your kindness, Mr. Carter," said Mr. Hutter, "and shall be pleased to receive a call at your earliest convenience."

The old house was not entirely destroyed, but was a thoroughly discouraging sight when viewed the following morning, while a small insurance only had been carried.

When Basil called upon the Hutters the following evening, he was surprised to learn, that the old man had not visited the scene of the fire, and more surprised when learning that he did not intend to visit it,

as he did not wish to view the desolation brought upon his old home. Moreover, he was now completely willing to consider any proposition for exchange that Basil might make him. He now appeared quite contented in his new place of abode and apparently had no desire to settle elsewhere.

Basil took his cue from the present situation and asked the Hutters if they would consider an even exchange, taking the properties over as they now were.

"But, Mr. Carter," said the old man, "you paid four thousand for this place and I told you last night I considered mine worth about the same amount, but now it is not, as I view it."

"Well, Mr. Hutter," replied Basil, "but you also said you did not value the house greatly in placing that amount upon the property, and the fire has damaged nothing else, thus the amount holds good and I will be satisfied to make an even exchange. Moreover, had not the fire occurred, the house would have counted as nothing to me, for if I have the property, a new structure will immediately occupy its position."

"Well, mother, what do you say?" inquired Mr. Hutter.

"Now, Ubed Hutter, your former good sense is returnin' and I'm beginnin' to feel that I may yet enjoy a little change, this place is lovely, and you will be as pleased with it as I."

"Well, then," said Basil, "will we have the necessary papers passed tomorrow?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Squire Hunt will make out the papers for me, he havin' always done my business."

"I will meet you at his office tomorrow at three o'clock," said Basil, "with the papers all ready for delivery. All of which duly occurred and Basil soon found himself in full possession of the coveted property.

After the business was completed, the squire re-

marked to Basil, "You are getting on fine with your road, Mr. Carter, you will, no doubt, bring the opening in on time."

"Yes," replied Basil, "easily, I think. We've got them all a going and now I'm going to get them all a going upon this 'Hutter property'."

"Make a nice place of it, I suppose," continued the squire, "am glad you've got it, it will add greatly to the appearance of the street and park to have a nice place at that point."

While this conversation was passing, the Hutters stood as if in a trance, just completely dazed.

Mr. Hutter finally got control of his tongue and inquired, "What does this mean that you two are talkin' about? Is this young man, just out of swaddling clothes, the Mr. Carter that is building this trolley road?"

"Verily it is," replied the squire, "and why not, pray? What has he done that should prevent him? Surely, you have read in the papers what a 'Miraculous scheme of finance,' he has been guilty of using to bring this road into being."

"I grant all that," retorted Mr. Hutter, "but I don't believe the good Lord of heaven could believe that this boy, just out of school, is the Mr. Carter we have been a readin' about. Land sakes alive, this young generation doubles me all up. Guess it's time we were goin', mother, before some other near impossible and unbelievable affair strikes us dumb."

"Mr. Carter," exclaimed Mr. Hutter, "let me congratulate you upon the good fortune that a kind fate has decreed in your behalf, through the God of heaven, in the endowment of the personality that you possess. You are young and in watching your career one will, I think, find an object lesson worthy of all the effort and attention expended. You have shown yourself up as a man who can deal honorably and honestly, in the face of a temptation to enhance

your own interests, as illustrated in your dealing with us, when we would willingly have conceded a thousand dollars in the trade as damage by the fire."

"And you, Mr. and Mrs. Hutter," retorted Basil, "have contributed much more to my happiness than you can ever realize. I coveted your location upon which to erect a home and purchased the Jenkins property, with the thought that it might provide you a good home, one in which more comfort could be secured during your declining years and with this I planned to tempt you to part with the property I coveted. Thus, you can see that my own self-interest was uppermost in all that I did, and I believe that it was through the kindness of heaven that all these happinings were brought about to happen. Mr. Hutter could not see it possible to part with the old place, until the old place had ceased to remain as Mr. Hutter had all these years known it. Now that you are both satisfied and happy, while your neighbors will also be pleased at the change that will occur at that end of the park, from my personal viewpoint the conclusion of it will serve to make myself and mine the happiest of all. Thus, may the good God of heaven bless and comfort you to the end of your days, while in making my acquaintance you made 'a friend indeed, by a very act in need'."

"God bless you, my boy," were the parting words of both the Hutters, as the tears actually rolled down their cheeks.

Basil had men at work next day clearing up the debris, and having prepared plans some time before, had contractors bidding for the job the third day after the fire.

The succeeding day the contract was let and Basil turned his attention to matters concerning the opening of the road, which was now less than two weeks away.

Basil's father, of course, must be present upon

that occasion, being one of the directors, and upon further thought he decided to invite, besides his own family, the Harts and the Kents, of a certainty Janice Kent must be present, and why not all the connections of the members of "The Triple Alliance." It was not a long way from their New England home and Basil believed most of them would be present. He knew it would be the day of his life and into the preparation, he threw his whole personality without reserve. The engineer was equally enthusiastic and the people along the route promised almost universally to decorate.

The papers in the big city took up the cause and everybody predicted a rousing time, with an immense throng of people to pass over the road and visit the park. In addition to the car equipment of Basil's road a score of cars were borrowed from other roads to care for the expected rush, while additional to what had in so brief a time been provided in park facilities, several large tents were provided in which to serve provisions and afford a place for social entertainment.

Mr. Green and "The Pair," who were often alluded to as "Darius Green and his flying machine," were everywhere present in co-operation in pulling the different villages in line. For really was not Darius the originator of the whole scheme, really the father with Basil as the execution functionary?

Enderton was trimming everything that would not disgrace the decorating material, with the last village upon the line equally responsive and having an elaborate band stand erected, near which were located several large cannon, each to fire in near succession a volley of salute upon the arrival of the first twenty carloads of visitors. This feature was the incentive for crowding the cars to be saluted to more than seating capacity, as upon the arrival of the last car, several celebrities were to address

the crowd present from the band stand, while appropriate music in abundance would add to the merriment.

The first car to leave Enderton on the morning of the celebration, had two full brass bands aboard, one to drop off at the park, the other to proceed to the end of the line. Thus, music was afforded at both places early in the day, while later both bands were to hold forth at the park. Extensive fireworks were provided for the evening at the park and each village along the line had arranged to elaborately salute the returning crowds as they passed through along about midnight on their way to the city.

That the rolling equipment provided was greatly more than swamped, only tells a part of the tale. Thousands were completely unable to board the cars at Enderton, public and private vehicles of all descriptions were pressed into the service of delivering people at the park. Everyone present seemed perfectly well pleased, while many were inconvenienced, but wore a happy smile. This "Trolley railroad opening" furnished a common cause and the people found fault with nothing, while whenever and wherever Basil appeared, a cheer and clapping of hands appeared also.

At the afternoon exercises the manager in charge, who by the way was Lawyer Mason, a director of the company, formally and happily introduced Basil to the assemblage, when the roar that went up through the treetops was greatly augmented by one long blast from the bugles of the bands, being immediately followed by the appropriate piece, "The King, the King, long live the King."

Basil well knew that the people would be pleased with a few sentences from him, and it was certainly fitting that he should make an attempt to please them, after the interest they had exhibited toward his new enterprise, but never before had he faced,

as the speaker, such an enormous assembly as was here present. However, as the band played he waved his hand and smiled, in recognition of the generous salute that was being accorded him.

The music soon ceased and Basil gave them a fifteen-minute address, that appeared to exactly hit the pleasure-loving tickle of the crowd. He humorously alluded to "Darius Green and his flying machine," as an important factor in making possible and desirable the occasion of the day, together with the coming convenience and pleasure of the people in this section. Every countenance present wore a smile all through this important oration, that greatly disliked to come off, and did so only after a rousing three cheers for the hero of the day, who had by his jolly address so widely opened their mouths, that the smile decided it were best to retire and give place to a more vehement demonstration, of the pleasure Basil had afforded them with his fitting allusions.

Basil's New England friends were every one present, and none were ever prouder of their offspring upon any occasion, than were Basil's parents throughout the whole day, while Janice Kent was having the time of her life, and when Basil was speaking, the tension of interest and anxiety was so tightly drawn, it seemed to those about her that the blood would burst through her cheeks. Proud, one can just bet that word hardly expressed her feelings, indeed, she could not be human and be otherwise. Here upon every hand were the results of Basil's patient and persevering endeavor, and to note the unqualified respect of this vast throng of people, thrust out toward him in sincere appreciation, necessarily created within the bosom of Janice Kent, Basil's own Janice, a fervor of excitement and satisfaction that would never forsake her memory.

Uncle Amos, who had been so greatly opposed to

the boys' alliance proposition at the start, now stood there with the tears running down his cheeks, while so proud was he, that his usually voluble tongue refused to budge.

Aunt Eunice, who had championed the cause of the boys at the start, noticed the condition of her husband in his contrition, and mused silently, "Verily, verily, they do say and it has here come to pass, 'chickens will always come home to roost,' Amos is chewing over again, the prophetic words he so confidently uttered concerning those boys."

The Hart family and the Kents throughout, were nearly overhelmed at what they were gazing upon, and knowing how much it all meant toward gaining the goal for which the boys had been, and are so persistently striving, to each family came the silent inquiry, "Will Jonas and Wesley be able to meet the success that is here already acquired?" for nobody could conceive of this enterprise being other than an unqualified success.

While Basil stood upon the platform contemplating the mass of people before him, and awaiting the pleasure of the musicians, he noticed right in front and near the platform, "Darius and Mother Green" and Mr. and Mrs. Hutter, all with their meat-choppers opened wide, and eyes riveted upon him, while in cheering they seemed ashamed of their inability to send forth greater measure.

After the speaking they rushed for Basil, as though fearing he might evaporate ere they could reach him. Darius yelled, Mr. Hutter chuckled and the women sent forth a laughing scream, as all sought his hands for a hearty shake at the same time.

Darius fairly yelled, "Basil, my boy, I am prouder of you this minute than ever. How can we sufficiently thank the creator of all the commodities, that you've managed to pull together of each and every sort, to make possible this grand celebration and its

complete success, for sendin' you to the farm of 'Darius Green' to receive his insultin' insults at the old barn door? Ha, ha, ha, my boy, but you could not be insulted for you had an abundance to fire back. You came to conquer, armed with frankness and perseverance, and not as others had come before you, with sneakin' countenance and intriguin' tactics. Whatever failin's Darius Green may have, he is alive with appreciation when along comes 'A Yankee' of your sort. Thank the Lord that you came, thank him for what you are and again for what you have accomplished."

"A'rah, a'rah, a'rah, for 'Darius Green with his talking machine'," went up through the treetops.

The fireworks were counted a complete success and everything had contributed to that same end. The power that bore this immense gathering over the road had been abundant. No patience-trying delays had appeared to mar the pleasure of any, and most of the people at midnight were home or on the way there, having like the little bird, "sung their happy songs all day," and now silently chanting, "Put me in my little bed, Just to rest my tired head."

The following day, Basil's guests were happily escorted to view his future home location, which all greatly admired, especially Janice, who considered it lovely, even the best ever. All fell to congratulating her upon the future home and so pleased was she, that tears of joy coursed down her flushing cheeks when thinking, of what a kind fate had decreed should be placed at her disposal. The substructure was now rapidly progressing and the elevations showing the superstructure completely excited their admiration.

Along came a car heading for the park, when all entered and soon were again enjoying the many entertaining devices, several of which they were unable to utilize the day before because of the crowd.

By prearrangement "The Pair" delivered Mr. and Mrs. Green into their midst, just before they were to have their midday meal. Thus, the Greens and Basil's guests had opportunity to become fully acquainted. Therefore, everybody became completely satisfied with everybody else and Janice Kent entered completely the good graces of Darius and Mother Green. Thus it was safe to conclude, that "The Pair" would take much of their future exercise upon the roadway between the home of "The Greens and the Carters."

That evening there appeared before the hotel at which Basil quartered his guests, a brass band, followed by a long and happy line of people, assembled from several of the villages, and augmented by the people of Enderton. The people in the hotel at once assembled upon the veranda, where Squire Hunt, the lawyer who had drawn up the papers for transfer of the Hutter property to Basil, approached them from the assembled crowd, remarking, "These people have assembled through a desire to show their full appreciation and do honor to the full assembly of 'Yankee guests,' who have honored the good people of 'the Urban Valley' with their presence, upon an occasion greater and of much more importance than anything ever before happening here. Thus, to the relatives and the good neighbors of Mr. Basil Carter, the merited hero of the day, we each jointly and severally herewith by our presence, commend you all to 'Almighty God' for his able care and blissful keeping. To Basil Carter, personally, we cannot overemphasize the regard in which we hold him. His are to be continued honors dealt out to him each day of his life, and as he is to reside among us we shall delight in showing our full appreciation, of what he has contributed to our benefit upon every occasion presenting itself."

Basil stepped forward and with a happy smile, generously and affectingly responded for himself and

his guests, when the procession moved forward with red fire and candles filling the air, with the band pealing forth "Yankee music" under the traditional name of "Yankee Doodle."

The following morning Basil's guests departed for their homes, with fond memories of this charmingly eventful opening occasion.

CHAPTER IX

A QUADRUPLEX WEDDING

September the first was now the day, and about when the several members of the Alliance contingent, were supposed to be on a hike for the distant east and their brides-to-be. It is but idle to speak of their anticipations and to tell that their joy knew no bounds, but it may be said, and truthfully too, that each had throughout the summer been lured on and on in his persistent endeavor, by an inspiration developed through ambition to excel, in establishing a commercial footing and in the achievement of supplying his sweetheart with a delightful home; not one was selfish to the extent that he desired any of the others to have anything less than he might have, but neither did they relish the idea of being excelled, and each knowing that the others would consider no limit in what they might acquire, was egged on to a seemingly limitless acquirement. It might well be considered a strife in which, like all other contests, "the best man must win," unless handcapped by unusual conditions beyond the contestants' control.

Upon a day Basil received a telegram from Jonas Kent, naming a day when Ellis and himself would stop off at Enderton on their way east, just "to look him over," adding, "reply if you have not already gone to New England." Basil replied as requested and in due time the travelers arrived at Enderton station. Basil had decided upon which train they would arrive and repaired to the station to meet them. As they alighted, Basil, standing back near the waiting-room, made a rush across the platform and there, in the center of a large crowd getting on and off the train, they yelled and embraced each other to the surprise and consternation of those about them, who were stren-

uously endeavoring to get somewhere, but were obstructed by what they considered a gang of impolite, indecent, inconsiderate boys, but when in the midst of their frolic another leaped into the affray, as though propelled by a strong desire to get a share in what appeared to those a distance away, "a free-for-all fight," and here we have "Wesley Hart," dropping off the rear car of the same train, having ridden there for hours, not knowing his "alliance associates" were aboard, and they in the same degree of ignorance concerning his presence. But now this quartet made a commotion in that crowd that alarmed a policeman, who could not exactly tell whether it was going to be a bloody fight, or just a few closed eyes and some teeth knocked out, so he stepped forward holding his club above their heads, shrieking loudly, "I arrest you, you are under arrest I say," when they all turned upon the cop with broad smiles. "Oh, no, we are not," they shouted, "you've got to guess again, ha, ha, ha." Just then the cop caught a view of Basil's face, whom he very well knew, and the boys then had it on the cop all right, who found himself greatly embarrassed for making such a mistake before all those people. It soon became known that these were great chums who had been a long time separated, and the crowd then became interested in what they had witnessed.

The meeting of them all in that way was indeed a singular coincident, for Wesley could not have known that Jonas and Ellis were to be there; in fact, no word had passed between Wesley and the others for nearly two months, so busy had they all been, that unnecessaries had been dispensed with.

Soon they all were belongings of "Basil's hotel" and a lively adjunct they were for several hours. Each one thought he could tell a bigger yarn than any other one, each felt that he was as well fixed as the others, each considered he could place his bride in as delightful a cage as could any of the others. "A self-

ish pride" came in right here among this fraternity good and true, proving that human nature will assert its rights whenever occasion demands or allows, whether or not, fraternal fraternity to the contrary notwithstanding, pride, ambition and pleasure cannot be held down. These boys were not differently endowed from others in this respect.

Basil decided to remain silent regarding his achievement, but coaxed the others to a description of theirs, which required all the time available until they retired for the night, or perhaps we should say morning, for it was long past midnight when they said goodnight.

The following day saw them off upon "the Trolley car," which they jocularly termed "Basil's one horse shay." Basil had a special car for the purpose of serving his guests and directed it should go straight through to the end of the line, not stopping at the park until returning. The surprise, even consternation of the guests, was something worthy of note, as they rode on and on mile after mile, until Wesley inquired, "if they were bound for New England in that car, or was it some foreign shore that Basil was intending to dump them upon? "Upon reaching the terminus, Jonas remarked, "a good fifteen mile this, I reckon."

"Yes," replied Basil, "and two more added."

"Well, well," remarked Ellis, "this is truly great, great indeed, seventeen miles and how many villages did we pass through?"

"Oh," replied Wesley, "one every mile, sure thing, who ever thought there could be such a place for a trolley road in this grand old country, and again, what kind fate was it that directed you, Basil Carter, over among these grand hills where so many people reside?"

Soon they had returned to the park. Here they found hundreds of people coming and going upon the

cars, and within the grove, pandemonium seemed let loose, with merry-go-rounds, shoot the shoots, ferris wheels and fakers of every description. So here was evidence prima facie of Basil's success, ambition to excel was receiving here a blow that tended to lower the temperature.

Ellis said but little, but thought a great deal, when comparing the earning power of this magnificent lay-out, and then contemplated what might be the traffic afforded the road from the output of all the factories they had passed on their trip. He could easily discern that the freight traffic would return a greater revenue than the passenger fares, although it was plainly apparent that the fare receipts would be immense, especially during the summer months.

These boys spent a jolly day of it at the park, remaining well into the evening to witnes the effect of the lighting facilities and enjoy a moonlight ride upon the lake, where a motorboat was in commission for that purpose.

Arriving at their hotel at Enderton about ten o'clock, as they were a tired lot they retired soon after.

Basil had said nothing concerning his home endeavor and so greatly amused had they been, it had not occurred to them to inquire concerning such preparations.

At the breakfast table, Basil suggested they take a walk to the south end of the park and get a little view of the town. Many were the favorable comments handed out upon the neat appearance of the places as they passed along, and when nearing the south end, Wesley loudly remarked, "By jove, boys, there's a 'blooming location' for a nice residence and somebody is just fool enough to have selected it for his."

"That is a 'corker' in very truth," added Ellis. "Say, boys, that's the best ever in this old town," and turning to Basil, "Pity, old boy, you couldn't have got

on to that, secured probably before you found your 'pleasing baby'."

"Yes," replied Basil, "it was held secure before I arrived, and I was told the holder could not be routed."

"Oh, then you consider it quite good enough for you, old boy," retorted Wesley. "Don't blame you any, but pity you much because you could secure it not, but say, Jonas," continued Wesley, "would not that have suited Janice to a 'biled cup o' tea?' My gracious, but I wish Basil had it for her. Land sakes, Basil, what are you going to do with Janice? It seems you have paid more attention to railroads than you have to her."

Jonas had been silent upon this subject, but he had not been inattentive. Moreover, he had closely watched the demeanor of Basil throughout and he strongly suspicioned that Ellis and Wesley were needlessly concerned for the future welfare of Janice, for he secretly believed here was to be her future home, and Basil was playing the part of hector for a bit.

Soon Basil had led them to the rear of the constructed underpinning and called their attention to the excellent view the position afforded, when they stood and stared and then stared some more. Just then one of the workmen approached Basil to ask a question concerning the plan he held in his hand, so this at once let "the old cat out of the bag." Wesley and Ellis pounced for him with a rush, shouting, "Here, old boy, the jig is up, now just treat and do it handsomely, quite too often you're leading us that kind of a chase. Did you imagine we had become real idiots or just simple goslings? Ah, here old boy, now come down, 'the biter is bitten.' You attempted to put one more over on us, now just look at the plight you may find yourself in, for it is up to us now to get even. Ha, ha, ha, and by jove, we'll do it. Perhaps we won't have so elegant a cage for our birds, but we will have one they can fly in all right, and sing some pretty

songs to their nestlings, too, but Master Basil, we just won't tell you all about it."

The boys repaired to the hotel and decided to depart upon the following morning for their New England homes, to enjoy a vacation that they each considered they truly merited. Each one had now established himself upon a sure and secure footing, each had a "baby" that was well worth while to nurse and to raise, each had a protege that was quite able to provide good support for himself, his lady and their babies. A well-earned matrimonial vacation was theirs by all good rights and a jolly quartet they were. They each intended to leave business cares behind and they vowed each to themselves and to each other, that for one good month they would frolic in playful capers as when but school boys together, and would make the welkin ring in the old town of Greenville and vicinity, as it has not rung since the ending of those happy old days.

Off the boys were upon the early train east, proposing to enjoy one full round of pleasure in the metropolis of the nation, which they would reach soon after midday. A theatre of the best sort in the evening, a stroll about the city in daylight, a visit to the notorious "Stock Exchange" and many other things of interest, not before having been done by them, and reach their old home the second night out.

It had become known throughout the village through the families of the boys, that they were to arrive upon that evening. It also was news of general interest, that they were each to take with them their brides when next they departed. That the four couples were to be married at one and the same session, all this had been the talk of the town for months, and Madam Grundy had made of it a busy time. There was not present, as usually under such conditions, a hateful jealous feeling; it may well be said and truly, too, that none of the seven who had been raised there

were disliked. The newspapers had informed the people of the achievement that stood to the credit of the boys, and almost to a single unit, did the people respect and admire them, while the girls each and every one, were termed by the town society, "just delightful." Therefore, with such general admiration, what might be expected to be the spirit and determination pervading the atmosphere, when these jolly boys should return for their brides?

As the reader has already become well aware, the whole lives and proceedings of these boys have been greatly unusual, the success of the boys has been productive of an extended interest in their maneuvers, being possessed by all who knew them and many who knew only of them through the press accounts.

As the train rolled into the station with our whilom boys aboard, the view from the car windows disclosed a bright halo, sufficient to reflect upon the low hanging clouds, and which greatly resembled the effect of an immense conflagration upon them, all of which instantly aroused the pent-up youthful enthusiasm of these fun-seeking boys. Thus before the train halted they had sought the platform, where before them were lined up hundreds of the denizens of the town and near vicinity, with a "brass band" ready to peal forth at the halting of the car wheels, but they were forstalled by the boys who sent up a cheer and a shout, soon interrupted by the band in "Home again, home again from a foreign shore," when, with everybody joining in at the top capacity of their lungs, the volume of sound was believed to be sufficient to make tremble the wooden railway station so near, while red fire and candles filled the air, with an occasional bomb and rocket.

The crowd stood back from the platform, that being occupied mostly by the immediate friends and relatives of the returning prodigals, into the midst of whom the boys jumped without fear or favor. Thus,

everybody was being hugged and kissed by everybody else who happened along and regardless, the betrothed girls all being present and receiving their share and perhaps then some. It was conceded the jolliest happening that ever happened in that town by all the old residents, who claimed to know a good deal about things and especially the science of osculation. With the loud music of the band nobody pretended to hear anything, and it may be doubted that anyone desired to. The sense of feeling appeared to be sufficient for the time thereof, talking would do for some other day.

But like all other "perfectly delightful occasions," this one soon reached its age limit and vehicles appeared at one end of the platform, with the two leading ones especially designed, for the guests of the occasion and their sweethearts or "brides-to-be." The two vehicles immediately following were for the parents and families of the guests, and while being led by the band, negotiated all the principal streets of the town, bringing up at the spacious Town House, where a choice and extensive collation was awaiting them, to be served up with steaming chaldrons and pretty girls, after which an after-lunch speech was called for and given by each of the four boys. Ellis must now be considered as "one of the boys," although not one of the original ones, or a member of "The Triple Alliance" in full standing. Nevertheless, one of the girls was his and that made him eligible for anything in the line of demonstration equally with the others; in fact, the boys all regarded him as "part and parcel" of the full combination, for why should he not be when he had secured full right and title to one of those infinite twins, which one might yet have to be determined.

Society had been greatly exercised concerning the identity of the twins, especially respecting the boys' identity of their own girls. The joke here yet remained upon the boys, and the girls alone could

be certain of their color, because, really, the boys were yet at the mercy of the girls for proper adjustment in indentification, but it concerned them very little and they might be said to be equally well satisfied whichever should come to them. Thus, it was yet for each of the girls to decree, as to whether she should take the name of Kent or Slayton, and whether her husband's surname should be Jonas or Ellis. Everybody knew this condition and there were doubts yet as to how they would finally line up. Some had claimed to notice "special attention" conferred upon one of the boys by Bella, when another had asserted that outward indications by Betty had favored the same one and then again, these conditions were reversed in the opinion of other observers, thus society gossip of the town was all at sea, as to who's who, and "what do you really know about it?" With all the speculation practiced, who shall say that the further and more intimate acquaintances of these four people, may not have brought about the discovery of a preference, though slight it may have been on the part of the girls? It will be remembered that it was Jonas and Bella that had been supposed to be paired off, but stranger things have happened than that the girls decided to swap boys, and it was the appearances that could lead up to this that had so confused society regarding what might be the final outcome, thus causing the situation to become thoroughly interesting.

The pace for these young people during the next few days was bound to be a fast one—a thousand and one matters needed attention. The pressure would be greatly more than were but one couple to be wedded, a multiplicity of minds were here involved upon each and every question arising, in preparation for the occasion, as, Where shall the ceremony take place? What clergyman shall officiate? Shall a ring be used? At what house shall it

occur? What about a reception thereafter? Shall there be music present and dancing? Shall the reception festivities be complete in one, or shall they be held separately at the home of the brides? thereby causing the guests to attend three different receptions in one evening. Of course the twins would naturally bring about a double header. Singularly enough, there were adherents to all phases of the case, but they were not insistent.

A general invitation to the wedding ceremony was given through the local press, this to occur in the "old meetin' house" where most of the parties involved had been brought up to attend, and this of the Congregational persuasion. One of the families, however, were Methodists, but they considered it fair that the majority should rule, only insisting upon the participation in the ceremony by their own minister. The affair, taken all together, was considered as a unique one and more than interesting. It was exciting to a high degree, it was the subject matter in conversation throughout the neighborhood, and very little else was considered worthy of note. indeed, were an interview commenced upon another subject, it soon had drifted into the important matter of the time.

A "Quadruplex Wedding" was more than unusual, it was unprecedented, in that section especially, and the complexity brought about, by the presence of practically an unidentifiable pair of twins, which may have made it a peer of its kind throughout the nation. The circumstances had become notorious as subject matter among associated press reports, inasmuch, as there were eight people directly involved in a wedding that would bring about a relationship, which would be a problem more or less difficult to satisfactorily solve, and again, to add the business relationship existent, which in itself also furnished an equally unique situation, thus

completely unifying the whole bunch socially and commercially, and yet, it had been so arranged that each pair were to be absolutely independent and as distinctive, in matters involving their actions and possessions, as though they never had met or known of each other's existence.

The wedding plans were finally complete. All were completely satisfied with the lay-out, which had been brought about with some concessions from all the parties involved.

The hall of a large faternal society had been donated for the reception, which it had been decided should be complete in one, as this hall contained facilities for everything contemplated in the plans.

The wedding ceremony was to be solemnized in the church at five-thirty o'clock, when the Congregational minister was to pronounce the word of unity for each couple, the Methodist minister to offer the prayer and invoke the blessing upon each couple separately. But a stipulation was injected that the ministers were not to kiss the brides, because as Ellis expressed it, "the physical requirement would over burden the available physique and make the duty an unpleasant one." We hear the reader remark, "how very considerate."

After the wedding, the invited guests were to repair to the dining-hall of the club, where an elaborate collation should be served by a "city chef" at six o'clock. At seven-thirty the reception proper should commence in assembly hall. At nine o'clock music for dancing should be provided, at eleven the leave-taking, before proceeding to the station to board the eleven-thirty south. The day of the week appointed was Friday, being purposely selected, as Wesley said, "to overcome and rout the traditional superstition that the day boded good to no one, but evil to all anticipations."

The day arrived and the hour became due. The

crowd assembled and the clergymen were in waiting. A carriage for each couple had been provided and soon someone standing upon the steps leading to the church entrance discovered four public vehicles, each flying a sizable American flag, approaching from the upper end of Main Street, preceded by a carriage conveying two appropriately dressed buglers, who continuously sent forth their warning anouncement.

The families directly involved lived not all in the same part of the town, but it had been arranged to have the carriages all meet with their "happy burdens", at a place where they could all in line, proceed together to the church.

The expectant visitors were all comfortably well seated before the arrival of the principals of the occasion, and not having been advised of outside arrangements, had upon hearing the bugle blasts become greatly excited, because something was occurring outside that they were missing and yet, dared not leave their seats for many were standing.

Not in the usual way did these unusual young people elect to do things. There was to be no parental giving away of the betrothed daughter, they were to depart from their homes as though going out for a drive, with just the pleasure of the ride and companionship, of the one dearer than all else, and they were, according to schedule, to leave the church in the same company as when arriving and then, to leave the reception hall for the railway station likewise. In brief, the boy and the girl were to be just they and they alone, as Wesley expressed it, "We are to be, We, Us and Co. hereafter, so why not begin now and get used to it, while we have the time and a good opportunity?"

The carriages approached the church, as if to deliver their occupants to attend ordinary services. A few people loitered about, intending to enter after

the marriage participants, just to witness while standing near the door, the actual tying of the knots, as seats had not been available for at least a half hour.

A couple of ushers cleared the way as the first carriage delivered its load upon the curbing, then proceeded to enter the church a few feet in advance; when the couple in the second carriage were upon the curbing, another pair of ushers stepped before them and proceeded as had the others, with slow and measured tread, and the same process followed the alighting of the other two couples. Thus, when the first couple had reached the altar, the last couple were just entering the audience-room door. While it might be of interest to our lady readers, especially of the younger set, to learn something of the trousseaus, we shall leave that to their competent imagination, believing, that would more accurately inform them than were we to attempt a description.

The position of the respective couples had been arranged as to age of the boys. Basil, being the oldest, with Janice, came first, then Ellis with whom, now they, the spectators, were all on the quivive in endeavor to decide which one of the twins was leaning upon his arm; some said it was Bella, others felt it was Betty, while there were others who declared "it was idle to attempt identity, for it simply could not be done."

Wesley and Sybil soon were the targets for remarks, but of course not such as the previous couple had called forth. Really, the crowd were eager to discover some clue to the identity of the other twin, by a comparison with the one who had already entered, when she should come into view, thus Wesley and Sybil were but slightly remarked upon.

Jonas Kent soon stalked up the aisle, tall and handsome, with something immensely attractive upon his arm, and for the life of them, the "society peo-

ple" could not detect one iota of difference in the attire, and certainly not in the face, for the bridal-veil obscured that to a considerable extent, but had it not, few, if any, would have been the wiser and many of them well knew it, for they had not been able to definitely identify them in everyday meeting upon the street, but now many of the people present assumed to know "which from t'other," with such remarks as:

"There, I know well enough that is Betty Hart that is coming up, there, I told you the first one was Bella, and now I know it was."

"But," replied another, "I don't believe it, I say that first one was Betty, I know by the way she carried her head as she walked."

"But—but—" retorted the first speaker, "that is not the fellow she has generally been out with."

"How can you say that, when you have never been certain which was which, whenever you have met them?"

"Well, you just wait and hear what name the minister uses with her," retorted the other, and that seemed the only sensible thing to do. Every ear was now put upon its good behavior. It had been the subject of much discussion among the people of the neighborhood, especially since the last return of the boys; as to the correctness of the suspicion that there may have been an exchange of fellows by the girls; none could determine, no reasonable ground appeared for it, only an imagination that appearances upon certain occasions had indicated a preference, that was believed by some to favor other than the one supposed to be "the one."

The ceremonies had commenced, and had a faker been present, with a large number of ear trumpets or hearing devices of any kind, he could easily and quickly have unloaded his stock, for all depended now in identifying the puzzling twins, upon hearing

the name pronounced when the important question was put.

Basil Carter and Janice Kent were the first to be dealt with and passed up as one, "forever and forever so long as life doth last." Now comes the suspense, and many were the ears having the backing of a hand, that no sound should pass it by. The minister, knowing there was much doubt as to which twin this might be and enjoying the joke immensely himself, took no pains to elevate his voice, if anything, reduced the volume of sound, to the annoyance and even the anger of some of the most anxious and persistent ones, who had declared so positively their impressions.

Ellis and his companion had been moulded into one, and yet the people, with very few exceptions, if exceptions there were at all, had heard not the name of the lady involved. Exclamations were plenty, such as "it's a burning outrage, that minister losing his voice power just at the critical moment;" another, "I say, he's just horrid, awfully horrid." Another considered it the duty of someone to protest against such unusual proceedings, but the show proceeded, nevertheless.

Wesley and Sybil were now being carved into one, as the minister had suddenly and completely found his voice. Nearly every person in the room heard Sybil's name and this made the other shortcoming appear all the more flagrant. One was heard to remark: "I shall tell that minister what I think of him for withholding the name of the bride of that second couple, I don't believe that wedding was legal anyway."

Jonas, the last but not least in physical and pleasing appearance, now looked fondly down upon the charming lady at his side, as the minister began the solemn words that were to seal his fate with that of the "unknown" lady, who so greatly enjoyed the

perplexity of the people as to her identity. Apparently "the parson" had again lost his voice, as the people there assembled had not heard the name of the bride, and much disgust was now present, for both of those "fun loving twins" had been married, right under the noses of their former associates and neighbors, without revealing which was which, thereby leaving those anxious people to "guess, if you can," whoever my husband may be and whatever the name I bear.

This sly farce could be carried through to the end of the game, but those who were to be present at the dinner were to be rewarded for their presence, by a sign in the shape of a monogram heart, large and plain, hanging from the neck by a chain, "B. Y. K." for one, and "B. A. S." upon the other, but these hearts had not been worn at the wedding, thus the people were left to nurse their wrath until later relieved, and many did not later tumble to the monogram, until it was explained by others who were more acute in their detection. Thus these inimitable twins had, to the end, continued to perpetrate their "non-identity joke." After dinner many were the scoldings, "that precious pair" received from their former acquaintances, but they did not set heavy, however, and likely had been forgiven before the parting hour, when the goodbys were said to "Mrs. Kent and Mrs. Slayton," no more to be addressed as Bella and Betty.

At the dinner, the two parsons appeared in a decidedly jollifying mood, and being naturally dry, parried well any blows struck at the loss of voice in the marriage ceremony, and otherwise gave to the occasion much jest and real sport, largely dwelling upon the happy finale of "The Quadruplex Wedding," where it was believed by all present, more real joy had been experienced, than at any other occasion ever happening in that old town.

The reception following the dinner was likewise a success. How could it be otherwise, with so many and congenial people to receive? It was moreover, everybody's circus with eight clowns in the ring and not a mule present, while there was no room for another Jack.

At nine o'clock the reception ceased and the hop began. This hop was not altogether a hop of the young, gray heads were plenty among that throng and they just "hopped," it was no walk with them. The young people were some ashamed of their deficiency as they admired the agility of those old people. Even the real "clog dancer' was there present and the floor was spanked hard and often. The brides were much sought after in the dance and their cards were full from near the start.

At ten-forty-five the dance ceased. It was time to begin upon the adieus. This was to be not a reception goodnight, but a parting salute, with much osculation sprinkled in, while as it progressed, many eyes were wet with tears, rather paradoxical this, as the ending of "so happy an occasion." But all had loved this coterie of young people and now they were to permanently depart the town as their home. It seemed truly, as it really was, "a sad parting of the ways."

Basil had wired to Enderton for two public conveyances to meet them at the station. Also had wired a caterer to serve for them at his new home a perfectly proper dinner. This home had been completed but a few days preceding their arrival, but it may be recalled by the reader, that Basil "was some man in that community," really, "the railroad magnate of Urban Valley," thus, all were ready to jump at his bidding, knowing full well the compensation would be good and prompt.

When leaving the train, a large concourse of people met their vision. Something out of the usual course was to appear on the platform, when that par-

ticular train rolled in, and whoever knew of any unusual happening to happen, if heralded at all, when there was not present a sizable bunch of humanity to witness it? Of course the orders received over the wire had heralded the coming of "the magnate," with his happy, and as they had in imagination, "beautiful bride," for whatever else could this youthful railroad magnate be supposed to have alongside, but they knew not of the coming of a carload of bridal couples, and as they appeared one after another upon the platform, all appearing to be chaperoned by Mr. Carter, the crowd present looked aghast, indeed, this was more than any Madam Grundy had ever bargained for. What in the world had taken place, what was really coming to this old town? It certainly could not be a circus, or a minstrel troupe, but before they could all pull themselves together sufficient to realize just what was passing, the motor cars had received their loads and disappeared down the street, but they all well knew the objective point, "the little palace on the hill" was to have abundant opening, upon making its debut as a home.

Some of the lively spirits of the town at once became busy. Surely, such a happening as that should not be allowed to alone entertain itself. A rousing serenade must be given that jolly bunch and "a full brass band" was engaged forthwith, to escort that jolly band of serenaders from a down-town hall to the extensive and sightly grounds of "the home-coming bride and groom," then orders were wired to the big city for an abundance of "fireworks," to be sent out on the first train.

The caterer had taken his cue from these extensive preparations, and equipped himself with sufficient of certain necessary commodities, to feed that crowd of serenaders. He was taking no chances in so doing, knowing full well that whatever might be furnished for the occasion, would meet with Mr. Carter's ap-

proval. "The mayor of the little city" was also groomed for a speech of welcome, in behalf of the citizens of the town.

Basil had instructed the drivers of the cars to proceed slowly as they left the station platform, and in recognizing many of the townspeople, lifted his hat and graciously bowed; when passing down past the long park with its beautiful shade, many and constant were the exclamations of those in the cars concerning the beauty of the place. Although having before passed down this lovely street, it seemed now to more completely impress Basil's male guests than upon the former occasion.

Upon the arrival of the party upon the extensive domain of Basil Carter, the boys were convulsed with ecstasy at the changed appearance of the premises. Moreover, Basil himself was much elated at the effect produced in the completion of his own plans; although the seeding of the large lawn had not yet added its part to the landscape view, it could be imagined what the effect of its green carpet would add to the sum total. A lovely home, indeed, had been wrought from out of the ashes of the ancient structure, that apparently had occupied the site for generations, the most lovely and conspicuous location in the whole city, as all had regarded it, was now the pride of the town. Moreover, it reflected much credit upon the present owner, for the excellent taste displayed in its full lay-out.

The party entered the house with their cups of joy overflowing. No expense had been spared in the decoration, much of which had been left with the taste of the decorator, who was considered no slouch at his profession, thus, the appointments were, when taken all together, above and beyond criticism. In view of all that appeared before their vision, the members of this happy party just went wild with enthusiasm, demonstrated by embracing each other, regardless. As we

have said before, the structure was not overlarge but was really overnice, and this meant all the more cosy for a young couple.

Janice was so greatly overcome at what she beheld, and knowing it to be hers, "her permanent earthly home," that her tongue refused to tell what thoughts were concealed within, and the tears coursing down each cheek but faintly expressed the gratitude pent up within her being, and which the tongue should express, to convey to her associates her full appreciation, while the prominent thoughts of Janice were, will the other girls have as good, and her fervent wish was that they should.

"Oh, Basil, Basil," she shouted, as if in full contrition, "what have I done to merit all this elegance?"

"Dinner is served," was announced, when the elegant dining-room absorbed their best attention for a full half hour, and before rising from the table, music was heard approaching from far down the street. As it neared the premises "red fire, candles and rockets" filled the air. Almost simultaneously, a squad of men entered the grounds with dozens of chinese lanterns all strung upon wires, which soon were suspended from the abundant trees. Thus the grounds were brilliantly lighted when the procession arrived.

It was indeed a gala night for that rural city and cheers rent the atmosphere time after time, after which the band struck up "Home, Home, Sweet Home," accompanied by the vocal power of a thousand people, during which "the mayor proceeded to the spacious veranda, where were the guests of the occasion already assembled.

As the music ceased, the mayor with a round, full voice, made an address of welcome that will ever be remembered, so long as the present generation and their offspring shall remain to gladly tell the story. Immediately upon the conclusion of this address, another quickly mounted the steps, faced the crowd,

waved his hands and turned to greet Basil, when the immense throng roared at the top of their voices.

"Ah, ra, ah, ra, ah, ra for 'Darius Green and his talking machine.' Give him a chance for he never was mean, he started the ball with his political machine, another one rolled it to assist Mr. Green."

After greeting Basil, his wife and his guests, the old man turned to the crowd, and seemingly inspired for the occasion, made a ten-minute speech that might make many another blush for inefficiency. Although not couched in especially fine dialect, his remarks were greatly to the point and immensely enjoyed by all within hearing.

Basil then stepped forward and immediately a hearty cheer broke forth. Quite a bit of humor was injected into his speech, especially concerning his friend Mr. Green, whom he said had but needed a "Yankee" to help him out of a sea of trouble and a multitude of vexations. But alluding to his own efforts, he assumed a strictly modest and retiring attitude, expressing his belief that the people had greatly overestimated his own importance, in the matter they were out to celebrate their appreciation of.

While these exercises were being put over upon the front porch and lawn, a squad were busy in the rear of the house, which had also been lighted; here were long lines of tables with suitable and plentiful provisions upon them, to satisfy any hunger that the vociferous shouting and long tramp may have produced, and soon all were standing about the tables and invited to help themselves, when it was noticed that no second invitation seemed necessary and as the hall clock struck eleven, the band marched away with:

"Oh, yes, I'm glad I come and some day I'll come again. I cannot tell just how and do not know just when."

The following morning, Basil entertained his guests by a ride over the line with a stop at the park,

where, of course, there was now but a small crowd, the outing season being nearly over. After an hour or so they again repaired to Basil's home to visit, as the guests were to depart upon the following morning.

All were now anxious to reach their own homes. The boys knew pretty well what they were to find, but the brides had been given but a comparatively meager description, thus truly they now believed, Janice possessed a most elegant and satisfying home, so far as the structure and appointments were concerned. But as Sybil was inclined to view it, the spirit within the home is really, the only true incentive to real and satisfying happiness. She doubted not that the proper spirit to make a happy home was present with Janice and her brother, reasoning, that they were certain to be happy, but also, could not she and Wesley be quite as happy with more modest environments? She decided that they could and would, having faith to believe that Wesley would provide for her, a quite fitting and equally pleasing place of abode. Why should she concern herself about that anyway, and resolved to think no more about it.

The twins were yet too fun-loving to bring themselves down to serious musing, concerning any comparison with what they might find to that they had witnessed as the home of Janice.

Bella would be the next to leave the travelers with Ellis at St. Louis. All knew that she was to become mistress of a well-settled home in an ancient city, but Ellis had told her he had replaced some of the furnishings with more modern patterns, and while Basil had a new home complete, he did not think it excelled his in satisfying one's anticipation. Bella had told him "it makes little difference whatever the structure is, it is you alone that will make for me a happy home." Bella had now come to believe that there was a preference, she now could distinguish a sentiment more in touch with her own in Ellis, than she had done

before when she and Betty had decided, that to them there was a difference in the temperament of the two boys and that they were paired off wrongly, thus, they had finally acted in accordance with honest intuition.

Having taken an affectionate leave of Basil and Janice, our remaining travelers were off for the distant west, or perhaps it were better to say "southwest." All this view of country was furnishing a new experience, for these girls had seldom been out of their own county, an experience which they greatly enjoyed, and the ride to Dayton, where they decided to stop overnight, and thus ride only by daylight, was furnishing worlds of entertainment to these young ladies. The day following was as greatly enjoyed, when at five-thirty their train rolled into the St. Louis Union station.

Ellis had not become thoroughly settled and fully equipped before leaving for the east for his bride. He had put the house in order but the exterior he had not provided for. An automobile was now coming to be indispensable to a full-grown establishment, but this he had not. Of course, Jonas and Wesley with their brides were to become his guests for a day or two and he fully realized that he could command no such demonstration as had Basil.

Ellis was a comparative stranger in St. Louis and St. Louis was some town, while demonstrations of the sort that had serenaded Basil, seldom occurred in the big cities, except in political rallies, thus our people were here expecting to enjoy a more quiet season during their stay and perhaps a more sober one, for here the heretofore "inseparable twins" were booked to part. The one to remain, the other due in far-away Texas. It was expected the parting scene would be affecting to a high degree, and more so, perhaps, because of natural conditions arising from the general belief, that one extreme is likely to be followed by another. These girls had ever acted in the belief that to

properly treat care was to hang it high as Haman and "let the wide world wag as it would, to be gay and happy is what one should."

A public conveyance soon had transferred our tourists to the beautiful home, Ellis had in waiting for his darling Bella and their bosom friends.

Ellis had wired ahead as Basil had done, which had insured them a pleasing reception and an excellent repast, to repair the ravages upon their stomachs made by their long day's ride, and until the inner man had been thoroughly satisfied, no explorations whatever were attempted.

We have said our people were to enjoy a quiet and perhaps sober evening, and this simply illustrates however much we can know, of what may be just before us.

Ellis remarked in a casual way, "Something is going on in the city, hear that band," when they all listened and Bella sprang to the door. A moment later she had called to Ellis, remarking, "There are some men out there in the grounds who seem to be stringing a wire along, what do you think they are doing?"

"Wait a few moments," replied Ellis, "and perhaps we can determine. That is what was done at Basil's, you know. By jove," he added, "now I know that band of music is to serenade us. You just see if it don't, and that is the advance guard out in the lot stringing wires for lighting the grounds. By jove, Bella, we must get busy to provide entertainment. We can't be caught napping, so let me get the telephone. Boys, for gracious sake, we are in for it, that music is coming here. Let's get a move on for what we can do. By jove, but I bet I know who started that and he shan't catch me a napping and forever hold it over on me."

"Hullo, is this Simpkins, the caterer, well, can you serve up four hundred in half an hour on my lawn, with coffee, cheese and doughnuts? Yes 'Slayton place'

on the hill, why yes, it is a serenading party led by a brass band. Yes, on the way now, perhaps so, will try to hold them by speech making, yes, well, inside of an hour from now. All right, wade in, a long table on the lawn rear of the house, yes, goodby."

The sound of music each moment became more distinct, until it had approached within three or four blocks, when it ceased altogether, but this did not deceive those in expectant waiting. It was now past eight-thirty o'clock. Ellis tripped out across the lawn, approaching a man near the gateway who had been engaged in stringing those wires and inquired, if he had any idea of how many people were to be present. His reply was not very definite, but enough to convince Ellis that his order to the caterer had not been sufficient. So to the 'phone again. "Hullo, Simpkins? Ah, just leaving, well I did not make the order big enough, must add two hundred, yes, well I don't want to be caught napping. Yes, they will be here in ten or fifteen minutes, only three or four blocks away now, yes, well get a move on."

Soon the music again burst forth only midway of the next block. At the same instant the whole lawn was ablaze with electric light, and as the band approached with the first comer to "the Slayton premises," red fire, rockets and candles filled the air, the band playing "Johnny has just come home again and brought his bonnie bride."

Soon the procession, six hundred good and strong, had assembled upon the spacious lawn, cheers for the "Yankee bride," cheers for the "Slayton heir," and cheers for "a good old Yankee serenade."

The occupants of the house were all seated upon the veranda, as the procession drew up, and when quieted down, three young men in bright regalia stepped forward from the crowd, each carrying an immense bouquet in one hand, with a crescent-shaped pedestal and spring fitted to the head, bearing a cres-

cent of Jacqueminots in the other. Approaching the veranda, each one made for one of the ladies, presenting the bouquet, and then adjusting the crescent to the head and making their bows, when the crowd sent up a cheer, as the band played "All honor to the Queen."

Ellis stepped forward to welcome the people, one and all, but before he could proceed, another cheer broke out for the Slayton heir, when he waved his arms as if to bespeak silence and laughingly said: "My dear neighbors and friends, I had planned to talk to you a bit about what I know of married life, but you have forestalled me in the greeting you have accorded, for it has told me that I have your sympathies, and that you are strongly inclined to extend congratulations, whenever you may have become satisfied that they are due me. I am happy, however, in the belief that when I have introduced to you all, the lady who now has the sole right to claim the position of being the best half, in the combination of units so recently centralized in one, you will fully appreciate what must have been the delicately strenuous efforts put forth upon my part, in successfully effecting this combination, and that you will then consider it a forced but solemn duty, to extend to the lady thus unhappily punished for her daring, your heartfelt, but cruel condolences, and I feel certain that she will appreciate fully, your delicate regard for her in her unfortunate mesalliance.

"We are both enthusiastically pleased at the significant display accorded so insignificant an object, and verily are prone to think that somewhere in your sky parlors is located, a supreme bunch of over-appreciativeness, but have to thank you all the same, as though you had not acquired that failing. Allow me now, if you will, kind friends, to present for your tender and appreciative consideration, the lady whom you have all come out to salute, and who, I think, will not blush with shame because a cruel fate has decreed,

that she should become the better and greater part of yours truly."

Bella stepping forward with radiant smiles and graciously bowing, Ellis continued, "Mrs. Ellis Slayton, if you please, kind friends, the Yankee, full fledged, from Yankeedom, U. S. A., whom I, Ellis Slayton, have with the assistance of a kindly fate been able to bring hither, for your kind and tender consideration as a proper acquisition to St. Louis society." Cheers were loudly given for "Mrs. Ellis Slayton" and her noble little boy, while the drums beat the tattoo and the bugles tooted.

Ellis introduced Jonas at this point as my "Yankee brother-in-law," whom I regard as an able assistant in my personal endeavor, to sprinkle the southwest with the blood of the "traditionally enterprising Yankee." Cheers for "the invincible Yankee," when Jonas gave them a spicy little speech, alluding to the trouble they had experienced in identifying their sweethearts, and set it out in so humorous a manner that the crowd often interrupted to cheer. The description was regarded as an exceptionally novel one, as seldom had a crowd listened to or heard of such confusion being brought by "just a pair of twins," but as Jonas introduced his bride with Bella and Betty standing side by side, all present could easily comprehend the situation Jonas had described, while great merriment followed as the humorous incident, began to sink deeper into the pleasing impression that had been effected.

Wesley and his bride were then introduced, as another pair of "veritable Yankees," but as the crowd had been standing for quite a period of time, Wesley said but a few words, which were in the line of appreciation for the deference and cordiality shown them by the visiting assembly.

Ellis now stepped forward and cordially invited the visitors to repair to the rear lawn and prove them-

selves, as good workers as they had been listeners, and not attempt to utilize their vocal organs while upon the job set before them, because it would seriously interfere with their ability to masticate, thus making him liable under the law, "for supplying ammunition with which to produce acute indigestion."

We shall now leave the Harts awaiting their train and go with the Kents to their cattle and sheep.

Arriving at Fort Worth, about mid-afternoon the following day, upon leaving the train Jonas at once secured a public conveyance to take them to their hotel.

Jonas had wired his friend, Mr. Hardy, to engage a good housekeeper and arrange to have her call at the hotel, the day following the day he named as the time of their arrival. He realized they had a job before them in selecting "the full furnishings" for their home and an experienced housekeeper would aid them greatly in making their selections.

Betty realized that she was tired, and then some more, after enduring so long a journey. A light lunch was served in their room and they gave themselves over to a recuperative process for the remainder of the day, desiring to be quite fresh when beginning their home furnishings. Both realized that several days of hard work were ahead. They were both equally determined to acquire as perfect an effect in making their selections, as had been done at Basil's and Ellis's homes. Jonas was not one bit satisfied with something "most as good" and believed his prospects in earning power were equally as good as those of his associates, declaring, his wife should not be called upon to play "second fiddle" to any of the others. It will be remembered by the reader, however, that he had not brought back with him, the girl that he had in mind when planning out his home. It had been Bella that was then supposed to become mistress, of the elegant home he had been so proud of in planning. However, that was now history and Betty was none the less welcome, be-

cause his ideal then had borne another name. Jonas mused that "his Betty", was quite as good and merited as much as had "his Bella," and was determined to pull it over for her, not only what he had now to present her as her home, but future needs and desires.

The following morning, the housekeeper selected by Mr. Hardy appeared at the hotel and inquired for Mr. Kent, who soon met her with a smile that it afterward developed had struck deep into her good graces. Jonas immediately escorted her to the ladies' parlor and introduced her to Betty, who in turn was delighted, with the first impression of her and the lady appeared equally well pleased with Betty. So here seemed to be a lay-out promising well at the start.

They were now off for the furnishing stores and made good time in securing their needs. Those things most needed as a starter were purchased in early part of the day, that they should be certain of delivery before night, for these people were determined to spend the second night in their own new home. After resting awhile at lunch time, again they went at the purchase of the smaller articles, and before the sun settled behind the distant hills, they had secured sufficient for their present needs.

Drapery hangers had been upon the job all the afternoon. The hard and glossy floors needed no carpets, but before their arrival had been well sprinkled with costly and pretty patterns in rugs and the furniture had all been set in. Thus, when for the first time Mrs. Betty Kent entered her new home, it certainly had a full and charming home appearance. As she entered the reception room and cast one glance around, she stood quite aghast for several moments, gazing at the charming effect before her, then as if some sudden inspiration had seized her, she made a bound for Jonas, throwing her arms about his neck and almost screaming, "Why have you made all this possible for me, why have you, and why did you think I merited it all?"

Jonas, to hector a bit, replied "I did not prepare this cage for you, Betty, it was Bella for whom I made this cage, but as fate was bound to decree, it has been another bird that has flown into it, as though it mattered not what name the bird might carry."

"Oh, but what an elegant home this is, Jonas Kent," retorted Betty, "I shall be so proud of it when first Bella and Wesley shall view it, but Bella also has a charming home and I am so happy to know that. I could not half enjoy mine were hers any the less delightful. How could Dame Fortune so favor us? What have we, mischievous twins that we are, ever done to merit such elegance? I do hope also, that Wesley has provided as good a one for Sybil. Janice has hers and we ours, Bella and I, and it will be only too cruel should Sybil alone of us all, have to content with lesser comforts and convenience."

Mayhap the reader is not so greatly worried concerning Sybil's fate, being conversant of conditions Wesley had left behind, when departing east for his bonnie bride.

The following three days Jonas spent about the home and in visiting the stores, upon errands for bric-a-brac and small wares that seemed to be needed for this nitch, and that corner, and something to go here, with what shall we put there.

The women being well installed upon the fourth day after their arrival, Jonas boarded the morning train to visit the ranch, which it will be remembered was located some thirty miles away. Motor cars were now coming into this section somewhat and Jonas was due to own one, he thought, before long, but the roads were so poor at present away from the city, that he would postpone the purchase of a private conveyance until the following spring, when after the roads were settled he would discontinue

train patronage, when his own motor should transport him from his home to his ranch.

Upon arriving at the ranch, Jonas now fully realized that the preliminaries of his business career were over. He had secured a good productive property, an elegant home and the light of his life for mistress of that home. What more but apply himself with his best endeavor in the interests of "The Alliance." Basil, he knew already had "his chosen baby" scoring daily earnings and Jonas would not be caught lagging behind, in offering up his tribute at the Alliance shrine at the close of the fiscal year, and yet, it had been understood between them that such was not to begin until the first of March. This year had been a year of preparation altogether and no tribute was to be expected. It had also been recognized that results from ranch business would be later in coming in than the others by reason of the character of the business, as stock must be born and raised before it could be a productive factor, but Jonas had in mind to make his contribution at the first annual round-up of the Alliance, nevertheless. A large amount of young stock had already been secured through the energy and activity of Mr. Hardy, and now that Jonas himself was directly upon the job, there was likely to be much more doing in that line.

After being about a couple of weeks, Jonas had learned that a large herd of young stock upon "an Arizona ranch," was to be sold in settlement of an estate, therefore, the first train going west had Jonas Kent aboard, with his friend Mr. Hardy, and after a week's absence, twelve cars loaded with stock were placed upon the siding at the Kent ranch. The stock being much of it young and therefore small, these cars contained a great number of animals; some were loaded with sheep, two contained pigs and the remainder young cattle and calves. After

being unloaded, these hungry animals at once fell too at the rich and abundant feed this ample ranch afforded, for it had been but lightly stocked. Thus, the prospect for rapid growth and fattening was extremely bright and promising. With what the ranch had before received in stock, this late acquisition would, with fifteen months' feeding, make a creditable showing in what would be available for marketing.

Thus, leaving Jonas with his Betty and his herd, we bethink Wesley would be delighted in convincing the reader, that "his Sybil" was not to be left so far behind, and "his baby" was not an idle child.

Wesley and his bride duly arrived at the Union Station in his new home town. They had greatly enjoyed the ride over the vast prairies, and especially Sybil, who had traveled but little and never before upon a long journey, but the thought often came to her what an endless territory is "these United States," however can I ever again see "old, dear old New England." Oh, it is an eternity away. Wesley, however did you manage to stray so far away from home, and all alone? It does seem as though your heart and ambition would have failed you, before reaching this far-off and almost unknown and unexplored region."

"But, Sybil dear," replied Wesley, "this is not at all an unknown section, you are not en route to any wilderness, you will find a haven of rest and contentment I'll wager yet. Our city is not behind any that our young friends have selected. Your environments will be fully equal to theirs, socially speaking, and with every convenience at your disposal that they possess. If my plans have not miscarried, your home will be found to equal theirs, unless it be the man of the house may be found 'wanting'."

"Now stop," retorted Sybil, "you have gone a fishing and I will not admit that I married a fisher-

man. No 'Cape Codders,' if you please, upon my plate. You are Wesley Hart, and not any simpering nincompoop, strolling about scattering nonsensical bait to such prattlers as I, for the slim response that might accrue therefrom."

"But, my dear Sybil, you are game, sure. I little realized you had so much spirit thus available in retort, thus you need coaching but a bit as to your specialties."

The train rolled into the Pueblo station and the happy home-comers found in fond waiting, Mr. and Mrs. Yates as they launched forth from the pullman. Mrs. Yates rushed forward at Wesley as though he were a brother, although she was about ten years his senior, while Mr. Yates heartily pressed his hand, shouting, "All hail to the Yankee bride and groom, but pray, quickly present the charming lady, for I am just dying to know her." Sybil had slipped up beside Wesley, when he, quickly turning, grasped her hand and facing Mrs. Yates, cried; "Behold, if you please, the newly-made wife in the charmer that I, Wesley Hart, so shrewdly and persistently courted among the 'Yankee hills' and brought forth to assist, in peopling the wild and woolly west," when Mrs. Yates and Sybil fell too in a satisfying embrace.

Wesley had been in frequent communication with Mr. Yates as well as with the engineer at the mines, and before leaving for the east, they had several times gone through the house upon the hill, generally accompanied by Mrs. Yates, arranging for the cleaning and renewing of everything that needed it. The former occupants had lived there but little more than two years, thus with no young children present, very little injury had befallen the elegant furnishings, they being the best that unstinted money could purchase.

It was just at dusk when they had arrived and after several moments of exhilarating conversation,

they proceeded to the car in waiting outside. The principal streets were already lighted and as they coursed along, a ways out of the city center, the streets were as yet quite dim, but beyond and up upon the terrace the new house, fully lighted, caught Sybil's wondering eye. "Oh, what a lovely place that is up there and all so brilliantly illuminated, must be a 'wedding there' it is so early in the evening. But is not that a perfectly lovely location?" The others said nothing while she continued to muse upon the delightful place, until she remarked, "that must be the home of some very rich man. Wesley, do such perfectly exquisite establishments ever tantalize you as you meet them in your meanderings? Do you think we could fully appreciate a home like that were we able to possess one!"

"I really don't know, dear, just how much we could appreciate. All my powers of appreciation have of late been so centered upon my latest acquirement, that a thing so comparatively insignificant as a residence has been neglected."

"You horrid fisherman, throwing out more bait, are you?" cried Sybil. "I will not submit to such evasive tactics, tell me what I asked you to tell me and don't beat around the bush, either, for—" but the car was now entering the gate to the beautifully lighted home upon the terrace, and leisurely proceeded up the long and devious roadway, but Sybil's chastening of Wesley for being a fisherman was never finished and neither did she attempt it or anything else, for she now began to realize that perhaps she had been making a guy of herself. In the twilight and glare of the distant lights, she had not seen the expressions upon the countenances of her associates. Had she, her remarks would have remained unremarked. However, a greater surprise was yet in store, and for Wesley as well, but yet Sybil believed they were about to approach either

the home of Mr. and Mrs. Yates, or that some sort of reception was on that the Yates people had been invited to and had brought them, she and Wesley, along as their guests. It had not yet entered her innocent mind that this was to be her home, far from it indeed, had it been intimated, she would have felt that she was considered as susceptible to be made a guy of.

The car had entered the large porte-cochere and halted, while Mr. Yates had descended and was about to assist Mrs. Yates to alight, when Sybil, with a slap upon Wesley's shoulder, exclaimed: "Why, Wesley Hart, did you not inform me that we were to attend an elegant reception? You know I would absolutely have refused to come just dressed in a traveling suit, all mussed up with a long journey. I shall look a fright with all the smartly dressed people here present, and a perfect stranger, too. How ridiculous. It is the first ungallant thing I have ever noticed in you, and thus too, where we are just going to settle in our permanent home. Why did you not first take me to a hotel, and why should those Yates people, who have appeared so nice, so contrive to embarrass me?"

But here Sybil was cut short in her scoring, for they had entered the hall and were removing their wraps, when she espied hung across the archway at end of the hall, a deep dark lambrequin, lettered with white roses to read, "Welcome home, Mr. and Mrs. Hart."

Sybil stood aghast, read and reread the beautiful inscription, then turning to Wesley, who also was a bit taken aback at what now so disturbed Sybil, for that inscription had not been a part of his designs, but it may be said that surprises for this happy pair were not to end even here.

Sybil, thoroughly perplexed, turned to speak to Mrs. Yates, but neither of the Yates couple were

present just then. They had stepped around the corner to leave the pair alone for the moment and also to observe, just what and how located was what might be inside the spacious reception parlor.

"Wesley Hart," cried Sybil, "tell me, if you can, am I awake, am I dreaming in a horrid nightmare, or have I lost my reason? What does this mean, is this our home?"

"Yes, dear," Wesley replied, "do you not like it?"

"Oh Wesley, Wesley, how grand it all is, but was it not nice in Mr. and Mrs. Yates to have it all so brilliantly illuminated upon our arrival, and that archway, is that not beautifully grand? But you have never given me the minutest intimation of what I now behold. You are just horrid in some respects, to keep me so much in ignorance of what is in store for me. Oh, my dear, just what would our people at home have to say, could they be present right now?"

Mr. and Mrs. Yates now appeared, to escort the bewildered pair about the house as they declared, and this seeming a natural happening, Wesley and Sybil accepted their escort without argument, and all four passed through the portieres, Mrs. Yates having Sybil's arm and Mr. Yates with Wesley, all four abreast in line.

No sooner had the portieres opened, than a loud clapping of hands burst upon the perfect stillness that had reigned supreme, when twenty voices rang forth in song:

Welcome home, dear friends, welcome to thy home,
We are pleased to welcome thee, we are glad you've come.
Welcome to our homes, and welcome to our town,
With heaven's every blessing assailing every frown,

while Wesley and Sybil meekly stood gazing in wonderment at the dazzling scene before them, with much the same feeling that a pair may experience when before the altar for marriage.

The people remained seated, except as each was escorted before "the visiting guests for introduction." It could not be termed "a real reception," for the ordinary tables were reversed, with the hosts as the guests and but strangers in their own home, already before their arrival taken possession of and managed by "a score of stranger friends" who had made their welcome complete.

As one couple after another was presented, Wesley was pleased to note that some of his intimate acquaintances were among the assembly. He had not had time to scan the crowd complete before the presenting began.

When nearly all had been presented, an elderly couple, sitting somewhat obscured by others, arose and were proceeding toward the receiving pair, when Wesley suddenly cried out: "Oh, for the love of heaven, Mr. and Mrs. Jackson," and could hardly await the formal presentation. He threw his arms about the old man's neck and turning to Sybil, Mrs. Jackson, Sybil, Mrs. Jackson, when Mrs. Jackson fondly and heartily embraced Sybil and there, right behind them, stood Mr. and Mrs. Hunt from Denver. When Wesley discovered them, again he shouted, "the good Lord of heaven is generously kind. My dear Mr. and Mrs. Hunt, how could you come so far to join this circus and to meet 'this Yankee clown', and the lady you are anxious to know? Here, my dear wife, are the four good people and true, who have made this occasion possible."

Mr. and Mrs. Yates had arranged for everything that could be considered essential, for the complete success of an occasion such as this. The chef of the hotel had been upon the collation end of the arrange-

ments. All told, there were present about two dozen of "the best society element" in the city and it was made a feature of the season by the city newspapers.

Wesley Hart had not been a stranger to the people of Pueblo during the past ten months. His mark thereabouts had been indeed a plain one. He had been considered a real man of the section. "That irrepressible Yankee" was something worth while to consider.

This homecoming had truly been a success, and it was so voted upon every hand, while the principals were kept in total ignorance of the whole bout and this greatly emphasized the whole happening, as regarded by the residents of the place.

When the self-appointed guests of the occasion had departed, except the Hunts, the Jacksons and the Yates, who remained to visit a while and become better acquainted with Sybil, than could be possible with so many present in a general powwow, the elderly people had already learned to fully appreciate Wesley's good judgment in selecting his better half, remarking, "It is but a full reflection of his acute sagacity, as already displayed in business matters." These people did not term it "Yankee luck," but a true type of "Yankee sagacity" as such had always been described to them. "Yankee ingenuity" had been a by-word with these people of the far west from almost time immemorial, and to see and have located within their domain, a true type of the real "Yankee breed," was by these remote people of the continent considered a good omen. In fact, had it not already proven out this, for had he not already tamed "the spooks" of the Jackson "hole in the ground" and conquered the obstinate waters of the Prohib, thus uncovering the treasure the God of heaven had so richly deposited there? Where complete desolation and loneliness had reigned for years, there now existed the appearance of a "veri-

table beehive." Surely all these conditions so recently changed, must be set down to the credit of "that Yankee," who through an exhibit of rare judgment and perseverance, coupled with an unusual amount of real nerve, had reclaimed from the "bow-wows of spookdom" and "the clutches of Prohibition waters," a commercial inspiration to the incomparable advantage of the whole district.

Wesley and Sybil had soon learned, that their domestic organization had not been entirely neglected, any more than had the furnishing equipment, as an excellent cook and chamber maid had also been installed.

The morrow had been ushered in by the full sunshine of heaven, a beautiful morning indeed, for one to awaken for the first time in one's "first real own home," and this happy pair felt that they were indeed in a real new world. It seemed to them they had completely quitted their former existence, that now they were out upon a new cruise altogether, not only as to their environments,but their very selves seemed to be not the same. A transformation had appeared to have taken place that seemed complete, so completely different all things appeared to them.

Their guests appeared not until quite late, and when the sun was high in the heaven. Breakfast had been ordered to be served late and it was plump ten o'clock when they were seated at the table.

The two elderly couples were desperately happy, as they appeared in the spacious hall for the good-morning greeting, while the young host and hostess were fully as glad in their hearts when greeting them.

All dilated upon the beautiful home and much praise was accorded Mr. and Mrs. Yates for their renovating endeavor. The Hunts and Jacksons felt more than repaid for their endeavor to make this young and meritorious couple happy, and they did

not regard it as a beggerly act upon the part of Wesley, in allowing them to assist him, for had he not placed in their possession a value in the stock they held in "the Yankee Mining Company", far greater in excess than the amount they had loaned him?

These good people visited throughout the day, roaming about the place and listening to some suggestions of improvements, that Wesley had conceived proper to make.

The following morning the men had decided to visit the mines, while the women poached about the spacious rooms of the house, the elderly ladies being quite as greatly enraptured as was Sybil at this elaborate home.

Accompanied by Mr. Hunt and Mr. Jackson, Wesley found himself at the milling plant of the "Yankee Mining Company." At first they stood off at a distance from the plant to observe the outward routine A whole hour was spent in this way, with no tiresome moments sandwiched in between. It was indeed interesting to watch the cars upon the tramways arriving and departing at the mill, to and from the crushing mills at each of the mines in exactly opposite directions, all working regularly with nothing but gravity for power, and more than a mile those cars went. The loaded car on the down grade propelled the empty car upon the return trip. As Mr. Hunt had expressed it, "commercial economy from Yankee ingenuity."

These visitors were also greatly interested in what they found inside the milling plant. Here was complete concentration of the minutest particles of gold and silver, with each separated from the other completely. It was said that no milling plant had at that time, been so complete in its delicate work as was this one, in fact, several thousand dollars had been expended in adding new and extra devices, for

a more complete extraction of the mineral, and it can be said that the people in the neighborhood had proclaimed a pride, in knowing this to be the most complete plant in the state.

During the latter part of the day, our party were taken up the grade to the Prohib, where everything seemed to progress much like clock work. Here they met Selkirk Graham, who escorted them far into the bowels of that old mountain, where many men were drilling and blasting the flint-like rock that lay near to the rich veins, which was making them all rich each hour of the day. The extreme length of the tunnel was nearly a thousand feet and the headings, where the men were now employed were very much richer than before Wesley went east. With quantity being greater as well as quality better, everybody about the diggings was happy, the men sang while at work and no frowning countenances were visible. The mine was a rich one and good pay could be afforded the workers. The old men were greatly exercised at what might be the outcome of the endeaver, this industrial Yankee might yet contemplate, all however, deciding to leave it with the pertinent question, "What next?"

CHAPTER X

THE WOMEN VOTE

The members of "The Triple Alliance" we left several months since, in pursuit each of his own vocation, and now that the time for the "annual meeting" of the Alliance is at hand, the members have received their notice, which the by-laws of the corporation prescribe shall be mailed by the secretary ten days in advance. It will be recalled by the reader that the office of "The Triple Alliance" is located at St. Louis, with Ellis Slayton as the "honorable secretary," and whose wife is looking forward with the greatest of pleasure, to the coming reunion of herself and twin sister, and also with their far distant brother. Although but sixteen months had passed since these enterprising people had separated, this reunion may prove to be more momentous than succeeding ones because it is preceding all others.

Upon the first of February the fiscal year of "The Triple Alliance" begins. The first February had been passed over, as it had covered but a small portion of a full year, after the members had first returned to their own stamping ground, thus it was now expected that each member would be able, to make a showing of more or less importance.

Each separate company had held its first annual meeting upon January first, therefore, the "Alliance meeting" occurring a month later, plenty of time was available to prepare and hand in their statements at the "Alliance round-up," also, to have in hand cash or equivalent for deposit in the treasury of the Alliance. Each of the members had desired that this first deposit should be all that it was possible to make it, as his standing with the others re-

flected upon the ability of "each baby," respectfully, to quickly respond with its earning power.

The readers already have formed an opinion as to who, would be able to make the larger deposit from the launching of the several new propositions, and because of the nature of the proposition, Jonas may have already been accorded a place at the foot of the line. This is but natural, and really, the other members had from the first expected this at the first round-up. Of the other two vocations it could not be so definitely predicted, as much might depend upon how prompt a start might be realized, and especially in the vocation of Wesley, as more of a gamble was naturally present in this enterprise." The "successful run of the fox," might depend largely upon the direction decreed by the "hounds of fate;" if successful, however, the fox could turn in a whole skin of great value, while Basil's vehicle might be a more reliable one, with perhaps a lesser revenue accruing in a given time. The vocations were of so varied a character and apparently so different in "probable earning capacity," it can logically be claimed that no proper comparison can be drawn and that a close comparison should not be attempted.

The four girls involved were completely happy in the prospective reunion. They had often corresponded with each other, and all were happy in knowing that each of them possessed practically as good a home and therefore, should be equally well satisfied with the decrees of fate, which had indeed been lavish in its dealings with them all. These girls, who always had been almost as of one family, realized now it might be difficult to trace a complete distinction in relationship.

Evidently it was to fall upon Ellis and Bella to assume the roll of hosts, and they could easily as-

sume the position, as their home was spacious and well appointed in every respect.

Ellis was now at the head of one of the largest wholesale houses in the southwest, therefore he was perhaps as well fixed for income, as were the others of this "Quadruplex connection." Moreover, he and Bella enjoyed the pleasure of the "best in society" and were considered as among the best of entertainers. Verily, "the old Slayton homestead upon the terrace," was kept up to its traditional standing as a hostelry of the first water.

On January the twenty-ninth, a wire came from Jonas, announcing his intended arrival upon the evening train at eighty-thirty. At eight o'clock Ellis and Bella started for the station in their elegant car, when, upon the "herders" leaving the pullman, they were almost frenziedly embraced by Ellis and Bella, while the embrace would not seem to come off, especially with the twins, and so intense was the greeting, that many of the passing crowd stopped and stared. "Verily," said one, "that meeting is a reunion in very truth, an exhibition of affection that all the world should make note of."

The following day came the stockholders' meeting of "The Triple Allinace," at eleven of the clock in the forenoon.

"The Triple Alliance" was a close corporation, which meant, that outsiders were denied the privilege of being present at the annual meeting, as they were of acquiring any of the capital stock, but the women argued that they were no outsiders and would not be kept out. They were members of the corporation in good and regular standing, and no meeting could occur without their presence, and as none of the men had sufficient nerve to combat that argument, the women were very much in evidence at this, "the first annual meeting of The Triple Alliance."

The hour arrived and Basil, being president, called

the meeting to order, being logically chairman of the meeting. The secretary was directed to call the roll, when a sharp discussion arose regarding the name to be used in calling off the women. Jonas suggested the women's names be not called, as the name of the man should include the women. Wesley held, that Mrs. should precede the last name of the man for the woman of that name, while Basil claimed that Mr. and Mrs. should precede the last name. Taken all together, a good deal of a powwow was then present, and when this joyously interesting harangue had subsided, Sybil Hart made an effort to be heard.

The chairman here called everybody to order, declaring "Mrs. Sybil Hart" has the floor, but to get order out of chaos and such chaos as there present, was something beyond human service and nobody seemed inclined to have an officer called in to install order, or pinch somebody who should rebel. Finally the laughing roar ceased from sheer exhaustion.

Sybil then declared that "the women will accept none of the suggestions offered. They bear distinct personalites of their own and are only a part of the men upon occasion, while this is not such an occasion." At this a roar that would not come off, with a loud clapping of hands, more than filled the atmosphere of that room, which was a large one.

Finally the chairman inquired if the last speaker had any suggestion to offer.

Sybil was game sufficiently to reply that, "We want the formality of our full names used upon this occasion as those of the opposite sex are used, as, I am Sybil Hart." The women clapped their hands and cried, "Bravo, bravo." The men slumped with sickly smiles and the roll was called.

This formality having been gone through with, the chairman inquired if there was any other business to be taken, up before the managers of the subsidiaries should begin their reports.

Sybil here inquired, "if the women are to be accorded the same rights as the men, to be represented in these reports, of which they are part and parcel, and without whom there could be no reports and no 'Triple Alliance,' for the undertakings that the men have undertaken could not have been successful had the women not been present to proffer encouragement," when handclapping was resumed by the women.

"I arise to a point of order," exclaimed Jonas, "the question as raised is not germain to the subject of the call." The men laughed, the women looked queer and the chairman ruled, that the meeting was called to hear the reports of the several managers, who were to contribute to the support and profit of "The Triple Alliance," and as the chairman is due to proceed firstly, I will call Sybil Hart to the chair while he is making his report.

Jonas objected to this, inasmuch as it is not in the by-laws, that a woman preside at a men's meeting. Here again was fuel for another conflagration, and off it went sooner than a Lucifer match.

Janice arose and considered, that no by-laws should be made to interfere with women acting in any capacity, and as I understand it, none of the by-laws of this "alliance corporation" mentions the name of woman; if they do and apply to the rights of women in any obstructive sense, I am here to have that objectionable feature eliminated, and becoming seated, the women again clapped, while the men subsided. When, a motion was made that Sybil Hart take the chair, it was seconded and unanimously passed.

Basil at once opened up upon his report, which he prefaced with a few remarks embodying the purpose of "The Triple Alliance," the compact which led up to its formation, with a brief synopsis of subsequent events recurring to the members thereof, through socially material entanglement, injecting much humor into his short address, at the conclusion of which, he

assumed an attitude of decorum and his report was given throughout, with no semblance of a smile upon his countenance.

"The Urban Valley Railway Company," as you know, began business for a profit about eighteen months ago. It had lost a part of the first summer's business, which, as to fares collected, is the best part of the year; regarding the freight traffic, we have had a good run of business throughout, with each month about even with all other months. At the meeting last month it was reported that the twelve months ending in January first, showed a million one hundred and fifty thousand tons of freight at an average of one dollar twenty cents per ton. The fares returning fifty-five thousand dollars, the freight one hundred eighty thousand, with the total expense of one hundred thirty-five thousand dollars deducted, leaves a profit upon the twelve months' business of a hundred and ten thousand dollars. It was voted to pay to the capital stock a dividend of forty per cent. This will require eighty thousand dollars of the net earnings and will afford Basil Carter sixty-six thousand dollars, of which he can deposit in the treasury of 'The Triple Alliance' fifty thousand, and fairly well care for family expenses and personal obligations, that may fall due during the ensuing twelve months.

"My associates in the business appeared well pleased at the results, as one remarked, 'Forty per cent grows upon but few of the shrubs in my door yard,' and I had not the heart to argue adversely the seemingly good point he had made, poor man, but may add, that the bankers who assisted me in financing the proposition, passed over about the most sincere congratulations upon my successful venture that one often reads about, expressing the hope, that I would strive to dig up another 'Darius Green with a trolley machine' and call around with my demands, for anything they possessed that could do me good. Further-

more, it would have made you all smile to have seen and heard 'Darius Green and his talking machine', after that report had been delivered. There seemed to be nothing in vocabulary, too extravagant for him to apply to 'the trolley proposition' and 'yours truly.' Thus, I have submitted to 'The Triple Alliance', my first annual report and herewith deliver to its treasury my first contribution, in the shape of a 'Banker's Check' for Fifty Thousand dollars, asking of the treasurer his receipt for the same."

All clapped their hands vigorously and shouted, "Great, grand, bravo, three cheers for 'The fortunate Triple Alliançe'," which were given by all present with sparkling eyes and smiling lips.

Basil here said he desired to make one more statement, which might assist in proving the statements he had made prospectively, that possibly more might be expected as earnings from "his baby."

"One day while in the big city, the president of the 'Rapid Transit Company' accosted yours truly upon the street, invited him to his office and proposed he sell out the capital stock of 'The Urban Valley Company,' saying, 'I will give you a half million dollars cash for that stock,' when I inquiringly replied, 'why not make it a million, that looks better to me and would cause my associates to feel better, were we willing to part with the stock at all?'

"'And why should it not,' retorted the president, 'it is a large amount of money for the outlay you have made for the stock.'

"The reply to this was, that 'upon the earnings of the past year, based at ten per cent par, it should make the stock worth eight hundred thousand dollars, but as we need something as occupation to keep us out of mischief, we know of nothing better to use as a toy.' When leaving, he called out, 'Will you sell for eight hundred thousand,' and with a smile I bowed myself out."

Basil now resumed the chair and inquired, if Mr. Kent would tell us all about his "charming baby."

"Yes," replied Jonas, "but guess after what has already been passed across, it will excite little interest and no applause. By jove, Basil, your story should have been put over last. The plains of Texas are slow in comparison and will not be hastened, even by the push of 'Yankee ingenuity and perseverance.' The location of 'my baby' is against quick accomplishments; like Missouri people 'we must be shown,' then given time to consider and then, do as we please about when we please. Thus, we compare more favorably with the aged and perverse mule, than with 'electrified wheels and rails.'

"We have listened to an elaborate report of what the 'electric element can do for the kite,' to enable it to bountifully serve those, who are fortunate enough to obtain a good hold of its tail, and thus be whisked promptly into the soft bosom of millions. But soft environment is not so promptly available in the state of Texas, for this Jonah in particular, as never yet has he encountered a whale, whose belly may be loaded with millions, but such as I have, give I unto thee, that you may accord me your sympathies if not congratulations.

"We, too, held our first annual with the advent of the new year. There are but three stockholders, because that number has been considered plenty to carry off all the swag, that 'a Texas ranch' can annually acquire.

"We own and operate 'fifteen thousand acres' of Uncle Sam's farm. We have raised and purchased a herd of seven thousand of the cattle kind, twenty-six thousand sheep, nine thousand swine and raised twelve thousand bushels of wheat, ten thousand bushels of corn, and six thousand bushels of oats, the corn and oats being consumed upon the ranch.

"We sold fifteen hundred cattle at thirty dollars

per head, six thousand sheep at three-fifty each, three thousand swine at four dollars apiece, and seven thousand dollars' worth of wool, also twelve thousand bushels of wheat at ninety cents per bushel. This totals the sum of one hundred and seven thousand dollars, with a total expense of nine thousand dollars, leaving ninety-eight thousand for the year's profit, upon which a dividend of sixty per cent was voted, and as Jonas Kent owns eighty-five per cent of the capital stock, of 'The Triplet Herding Company' and has no outstanding personal obligation, but with some cash in bank, he can easily spare 'fifty-five thousand dollars' for the 'poor Triple Alliance.'

"In the inventory of the property present after the wind-up, we find the cattle to number fifty-five hundred, the sheep twenty thousand, the swine six thousand, all having a total value of one hundred sixty-two thousand dollars, and the land and improvements at the original figure, one hundred and fifty thousand.

"This herd will allow of larger sales next year, as from this point the increase will be enormous and I hope to appear here again at the next annual meeting, with a respectable contribution for our 'needy Alliance,' and yet accidents may happen, as we sometimes have tornadoes and other wild things to contend with, that the solemn old east does not have to encounter.

"The progress made leading up to the organization of 'The Triplet Herding Company,' should not be taken as a criterion in attempting to start a prosperous ranch in so prompt a manner. It must be remembered that several favorable happenings happened to make my efforts promptly successful. Without these aids I tremble to think, of what might have been, the littleness of my contribution this day to the treasury of the 'Alliance.'

"My most sanguine expectations have been far exceeded through the interposition of a kind fate, while

I think so favorable a combination of events, could not have presented themselves otherwise. True, not always would they have encountered a character, who could or would have accepted the conditions presented, nevertheless, the character was out seeking opportunities, while it appeared like opportunities searching for an appreciator, and it proved out that Jonas Kent possessed that quality of appreciation, that consistently refused to allow them to get by. Thus, as often happens in an apparently natural course of events, we are led by an invincible or instinctive factor, to commit acts that at another time might appear to be of an impossible character and when, the conditions presenting themselves were almost or quite miraculous.

"I confess, moreover, that much and intense nerve, aided by a determination to arrive through some process of evolution, was the inspiration that goaded Jonas Kent forward to make such daring deals, without which, his possessions would have been far less and his contributions to 'The Triple Alliance' greatly insignificant, in comparison with the deposit just received by the treasurer from Mr. Carter, but which I am greatly pleased to follow in amount, as well as in fact. For this check, Mr. Treasurer, kindly write out a receipt."

"Mr. Hart has the floor next," remarked the chairman, "by the twinkle of his eye and by the confident expression he wears, I am forced to think he has an interesting tale to entertain us with."

A smile stole over the countenances of all present, as Wesley arose to say his little piece.

"He, from whom much is expected, shall be the most disappointing of all," was Wesley's opening salute. "We just up and went to the hills of far distant Colorado, Sybil and I. We had located ourselves as far remote from all former associations, as seemed necessary to enable us to alone by ourselves and in our own good way and time, satisfactorily at least to our-

selves, work out our own blessed salvation and as far as possible that of 'our babies.'

"We pitched our tent amid pleasant environments just without the limits of a beautiful city, whether wisely or no, future chronicles will have to tell you. If they attempt to describe and locate our humble place of abode, they will likely term it and its location, 'The elephant upon the hilltop.'

"We were not to approach this elephant with 'brass bands and fireworks.' It required not the light or inspiration of such elements to lure us to our goal, the apartments within the creature were plentifully illuminated, the warmth of the friendship awaiting us therein, was quite sufficient for the day thereof, thus we, Sybil and I, became installed within the precincts of a beautiful home, largely through the the kind aid of sincere friends, with whom mere accident had placed me in contact. Perhaps, as Mr. Kent has said, through the kind decrees of some personality of fate, a factor all may believe in to some extent, but probably is well embodied in the word accident. I am using this phase of digression, because of the close alliance of such good friends with the very inception of my enterprise, without whom I might not have had any report to offer, any 'baby' to nurse, or any 'elephant' to reside in with my bonnie bride.

"Sybil and I are just a pair of Yankee miners, and are termed just that by our most intimate acquaintances. We possess two more or less profitable holes in the ground. These holes have been found to contain money, just money, nothing else of importance in one, unless we except a few of the spook kind, which, however, have caused us no apprehension. The other hole, we are not sorry to say, contains what promises to assist greatly in the enlargement of our deposit with 'The Triple Alliance.' Aside from the real money we can pick up in many

compartments of the other hole, and which has already made a respectable addition to the total of real money picked up, much greater increase may reasonably be expected from this side issue, than from the real money product that is present in abundance. It has been said that 'a good mine' is the richest affair among the many assets of men. 'A poor mine' would jeopardize both the body and soul of man.

"We, Sybil and I, assisted by co-operators, are in a producing condition. We have in our employ about thirty men connected with each hole, with about fifteen men at the milling plant, at an average wage of three dollars fifty per day. This, with overhead charges, makes up a round total of four hundred dollars' expense per day.

"The production during the past twelve months, has averaged six hundred and seventy ounces of silver and eighty-five ounces of gold per day. The silver value was four hundred and two dollars, an amount equal the full expense, the gold value seventeen hundred dollars, this amount, accruing to the stock and surplus working capital, would mean in dividends alone, five hundred per cent upon the full capitalization.

"At our annual meeting last month, a dividend upon the stock was declared of four hundred per cent, thus leaving a surplus in the treasury of the company, of an amount equal to the capitalization, which makes a reasonably sound condition in the finances of the company to withstand a streak of hard luck, that occasionally might happen along, and we, Sybil and I, owning seventy-five per cent of the stock, were obliged to accept three-fourths of what Jack Loon terms 'the dough,' which after providing for outstanding personal obligations and well caring for ourselves, with all our babies present and future, will allow of a deposit with 'The Triple Alli-

ance', which we are happy in being able to make, of the snug sum of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, which in the form of a 'Banker's Check' is herewith tendered."

All present, but Sybil, simply at first looked aghast and then, looked across at each other, while none attempted to make any remarks.

The first to recover from the season of semi-animation was Basil, who inquired as to what action the meeting cared to take upon the several reports, when Jonas moved that the first two reports offered be accepted.

"And why not all?" inquired Janice.

Jonas arose and vigorously opposed the acceptance of Wesley's report as rendered, saying "that no such condition as has obtained was contemplated or even dreamed of, when the compact declaring for the formation of 'The Triple Alliance' was given birth, it was contemplated, however, that one might be able through conditions especially favorable to his particular enterprise, to contribute more than another, perhaps occasionally, as good fortune might wave up and down. I think it was somewhat in the minds of those interested, that one might contribute more than another from the business of a certain year, when upon the next year another might lead and it was upon that feature that the foundation of the compact rested. Misfortune might overtake one of the members for a year or even several years, when the more fortunate ones should, 'through this compact, share in that one's misfortune and therefore continue to keep 'Honors Even,' as they were at the start. That being the true purpose of the formation of 'The Triple Alliance,' with the conditions exposed through Mr. Hart's report, showing such an overwhelming amount available, in excess of what are the contributions of the other members, I cannot conscientiously accept his full donation, as it ap-

pears to me at present. I would be pleased, however, to listen to some expression of opinion from others."

Basil replied to this invite first with a broad smile, directed especially at Wesley, after which he said: "The position Mr. Kent has taken is really the only logical one that could honorably be taken, when considering the case to end with this single year's report, but it could not be rightfully considered in this way, because of the uncertainties of the future, which no man can definitely discount and especially one engaged in a mining enterprise, while apparently, a continuation of Mr. Hart's excessively lucrative business may be expected, there may be secreted in the mists of the near future, obstacles of disappointment that could reduce the revenue of 'The Yankee Mining Co.,' to a point much below that of 'a ranch' or 'a trolley railway.' It is not a unit of several years that the purpose of our compact is based upon. Thus, I am not certain that we have the right to object to whatever may be tendered from a member, if it be actual net profits after deducting a satisfactory amount for personal and family needs, upon which no restriction was placed by the tenor of the compact. I think if Mr. Hart insists upon the acceptance of his magnificent donation, 'The Alliance' cannot refuse to accept it, therefore, it really is up to him. Are there other expressions of opinion to be listened to?"

The lady members were silent right here. They were not claiming their rights, a point which Basil suggested, adding, that were the ladies to claim the right of voting, they should also accept the responsibility of debating. If one should obtain a position in a blacksmith shop, she would be expected as well to shoe a horse upon occasion, as to stand at the anvil or vise engaged in some more agreeable pursuit.

A smile crossed the countenances of the ladies at

this sally, but no remarks helped on the discussion, while they all looked toward Wesley, hoping for some words of comfort from him, but he had said his little piece, and after objection had been made to the acceptance of his report, he could not consistently move for its acceptance, or speak further upon the subject.

Jonas, having made the present motion before the meeting, could do nothing but withdraw it, which must be done or it must be voted upon.

Janice finally moved that all the reports be accepted and this was declared out of order, when they all giggled, while Sybil seconded the first motion and called for the question. The motion that Jonas made must then be voted upon, unless an amendment was offered and accepted, thus the motion was put and resulted in nobody voting but the women, and they all voted "no."

Jonas had reasoned the matter out somewhat since listening to Basil's remarks, although taking little stock in the talk of trouble creeping in to prevent Wesley's excessive earnings. He realized that the tenor of their compact did not provide for, or preclude, any excessive donations that might be tendered, any more than did it preclude any minimum amount. Thus he offered another motion to accept each report separately, in the order in which they had been delivered, and the voting went merrily forward, while the treasurer found he had in his custody belonging to "The Triple Alliance" the colossal sum of "three hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars."

But it was a bit chafing to Basil and Jonas, that about two-thirds of the amount had been donated by Wesley, when all realized that their efforts had been fully as able and untiring and their success extremely unusual, but to the reader, the conclusion that must be arrived at, must be drawn from the fact,

that Wesley's unusually good fortune had centered in the accident of luck, and yet, another could have possessed the same property and not have operated it with the same results, having possibly adopted different methods and exhibited a different type of judgment, in selecting his executive force of operators.

The fiscal year had rolled around, the annual meetings of the several corporations had been held and the footings of all had materially increased.

The annual round-up of "The Triple Alliance" was about to occur. The members were on their way to St. Louis headquarters and were supremely hap- in anticipation of the coming reunion with all its attendant pleasures.

Soon they were assembled within the spacious rooms of "Slayton Hall," all having arrived upon the same day. The evening of that day was grandly and riotously spent, care had no place of abode in the minds or hearts of anyone present. The following day and evening all were as "tempest and sunshine."

The second day after the arrival of these happy-go-lucky-as-you-please-type of the human make-up, "The Triple Alliance" was to hold its annual at eleven of the clock in the forenoon, when promptly the members assembled, one and all, no lady even forgetting to be present.

The meeting was called to order by the president, each one having now cast off all semblance of gay frolic. The stern demeanor of business closed down upon every action.

The reports of the last meeting were read. The chairman inquired if Mrs. Hart would kindly take the chair. At this a smile appeared upon every countenance as they recalled the incident of a year ago.

Basil opened up with the statement, that much progress had been made along the lines he repre-

sented, 'his baby' had been overburdened with the demands made upon it, notwithstanding large additional facilities, and would continue to remain unequal to the task set before it, for at least another year, as traffic can well increase faster than can facilities to meet it.

"The Urban Valley Railroad," received a million four hundred and fifty thousand fares, carried one hundred seventy-five thousand tons of freight, at an average of one dollar and twenty-five cents per ton, received five thousand dollars from perquisites granted at the picnic grove and ten thousand for lighting streets and homes, all totaling three hundred and six thousand two hundred fifty dollars, with an expense of one hundred and seventy thousand, leaving for stock one hundred and thirty-six thousand two hundred fifty dollars. It was voted to declare a dividend of sixty per cent, this requiring one hundred and twenty thousand dollars of the net earnings, of which Janice and Basil Carter's stock called for ninety-nine thousand dollars, eighty-five of which I now hand over to the treasurer of "The Triple Alliance" in this certified check. Having now concluded my report, I will resume the chair and call upon Mr. Kent to tell us what he can, concerning the operations of "his baby."

Jonas began as before when offering his report, in complaint of the modus operandi in conducting reception of the reports, saying, "the smaller fish in the puddle should be accorded the satisfaction and courtesy of passing in his check first, as the humilating effect would be less embarrassing, none like to be excelled and I believe Jonas Kent may be greatly more sensitive than many another. However, as the decree appears to have gone forth that 'big dogs may eat up little dogs,' I'll have to graciously, and perhaps gratefully, submit to conditions as they are, giving thanks to somebody that I am permitted at all

to offer 'a poor ranch' report, to be placed in company with that of 'a railroad magnate' and 'gold and silver diggers.'

"A humble ranch man has not the moral right to go out into dooryards and pick up dollars and gold eagles by the bushel, or have the dear public in millions at his gate clamoring and crowding for opportunity to toss over their money bags, in exchange for a ride. Moreover, Jonas Kent never yet had the nerve or cold-blooded heart, to demand a man's money for passing out a short ride, which might be considered in any well-regulated community as a hold-up, and down our way a hold-up man is likely to be considered simply a highwayman, and subject to the kind treatment of 'hanging by the neck until he shall be dead.'" Here for the moment the decorum of the meeting had become insincere.

"There appearing to be no way of avoiding full responsibility in these premises and believing your patience to have been already bored, I will undertake to inform you that 'my baby' is yet a living child and has kicked up its heels throughout the year, and more or less vigorously with the following results:

"The births upon the farm have been twenty-five hundred of the cattle kind, eighteen thousand of sheep nature and eleven thousand of swine; additions by purchase, two thousand cattle kind, six thousand sheep and four thousand swine. Thus we have a pretty happy family altogether of fifty-four thousand head, not including any of the births in our home, and will tell you about some of them later." Again the decorum of the meeting had lost its prestige.

"At the annual round-up we had marketed two thousand eight hundred cattle at an average of thirty-three dollars each, ten thousand sheep at three seventy-five each, eight thousand swine at four dollars and sixteen thousand dollars' worth of wool, with eighteen thousand seven hundred and fifty bushels of wheat

at ninety cents a bushel, making the receipts, altogether, one hundred and ninety thousand, with total expense of eleven thousand deducted, all of which show a profit of one hundred and eighty thousand. A dividend was declared of one hundred and forty per cent, eighty-five per cent of which came to Jonas and Betty Kent. Of this sum they can spare, after being good to themselves and 'their babies,' the modest sum of one hundred thousand dollars, as a deposit with 'The Triple Alliance,' with a surplus from the business of the year remaining in the treasury of 'The Yankee Herding Company', of forty thousand dollars as a starter for the next year's business. After all, the 'poor farmer' can be grateful for some droppings, while 'railroad magnates' and 'gold diggers' are getting theirs."

"I feel morally certain that Mr. Hart desires to tell us how the cold world has used him during the past year," remarked the chairman. "His appearance certainly does not indicate that he has been too badly used, undoubtedly 'the good wife' has groomed him nicely and kept his spirits unruffled."

"Yes indeed, Mr. Chairman," was the retort. "And would to God that many another could say as much and be as happy. Truly, a kind fate has been with us and decreed many grand and good things for our benefaction, but it is about 'the baby' that you are anxious to learn, not the baby of the home, however, for that is our own secret as yet, but of 'the baby among the hills' I will tell you some stories."

"The milling plant has been upon a routine production for the greater part of the year. It took on a pace soon after I returned from our previous annual that was entirely satisfactory, and our executives considered well enough 'was of the greater service when blessedly left alone.' Thus the pace at first acquired has been maintained all throughout.

"An 'experimental department,' alluded to in my

former report, has developed into something of a 'revenue dispenser.' The choice minerals discovered during last year have been found present in considerable quantities, and while the fore part of the year was largely lost to production, the last half has made a creditable showing.

"The milling plant has averaged throughout the year, seven hundred ounces of silver per day and eighty-five good ounces of gold. The silver value was four hundred and twenty dollars, with the gold value seventeen hundred dollars per day; as appearing in the last report, the silver production has been equal to the total expense, leaving the gold as clear profit.

"The chemical department for the year has produced per week, on average, platinum, one hundred ounces; indium, fifty ounces; radium, thirty ounces; and asmium, eighteen ounces, values respectively, twelve, fifteen, forty-five and fifty-five dollars per ounce, total value per week of four thousand two hundred and ninety dollars, with an expense of seven hundred and ninety dollars, leaving as net profit thirty-five hundred, which, added to the gold production, shows a total profit of six hundred and ninety-two thousand dollars."

"At the annual meeting the dividend declared, was six hundred per cent upon the full capital stock, and Sybil and Wesley Hart must lug off three-fourths of the amount paid out, meaning four hundred and fifty thousand. The even four hundred thousand we have decided we could spare as our annual donation to 'The Triple Alliance,' and yet, get through the coming year in a comfortable manner. In closing, we ask the treasurer's receipt for this certified check."

"What action will you take upon the reports," inquired the chairman.

"Well," responded Jonas, " 'The Triple Alliance' has accepted the money and we cannot do otherwise than accept the reports, but by jove, it is a mighty hard

pill for Jonas Kent to swallow without experiencing some degree of nausea, in being obliged to accept one-third of Mr. Hart's donation, when contributing but one-fourth as much myself to the cause. I am donating thirty-three thousand for his benefit, when in return he is placing one hundred and thirty-three thousand for my credit, and I tell you plainly, I don't like it."

While now it seemed apparent to each, that he had successfully negotiated the prescribed route, and completely upheld his honor with his associates, the satisfaction present they all considered, could not properly be computed and compensated with the coin of the realm. Indeed, no earthly commodity available, aside from affection for loved ones, could bear up against the soul-satisfying reflections of these boys. Money for money's sake was not the goal they had sought after, but to gain the position they had attained, through the practice of none other than shrewd but upright dealing with all mankind, with whom they had been assigned to deal, was truly the satisfying portion they now enjoyed.

The reports of the past year's endeavor, when formally read and handed in to the secretary, all showed a considerable increase over the results of the previous year. The Farm and Mines, however, had gained a material percentage above that of the railroad; intelligently considered, mining is capable of possibilities beyond human conception, and Wesley Hart had fully demonstrated the correctness of this diagnosis.

A railroad, being a semi-public affair, may be subject to a handicap through the demands of the public, for when profits are known to be excessively large, the dear public, of course, has a word or two to say about it.

The farm would generally be taken as the smallest producer of the three items in question, but the possibilities of this often despised and belittled vocation, have been proven by the indomitable will and saga-

cious enterprise of Jonas Kent, to be quite the equal of any, even the best of gambles in mining, as his showing on the present occasion surpasses Wesley's by a few thousand dollars, while now that it is well started, will show a greater increase with less endeavor.

After deducting a liberal amount, each from his own part of the profits of his own business for personal use, the donations to the treasury of "The Triple Alliance," added to the amount possessed by the treasury the year before, brought the total up to one million five hundred fifty thousand dollars, which suggested the division called for by the Alliance Compact.

It was then voted to divide twelve hundred thousand dollars of it into four parts, to be held and owned separately by the members of "The Triple Alliance," Ellis now being considered as a full member of the alliance, through contributing his service as secretary and manager of the financial equipment.

In leaving these unusual and enterprising young people to course their way along, a sentiment of regret injects itself into our thoughts, that the true type of manhood exemplified by them, is not greatly more present within the human family and that the common weal do not naturally and more fully appreciate, the type of character that can make possible for all, "a successful Triple Alliance."

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